Dungeon®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

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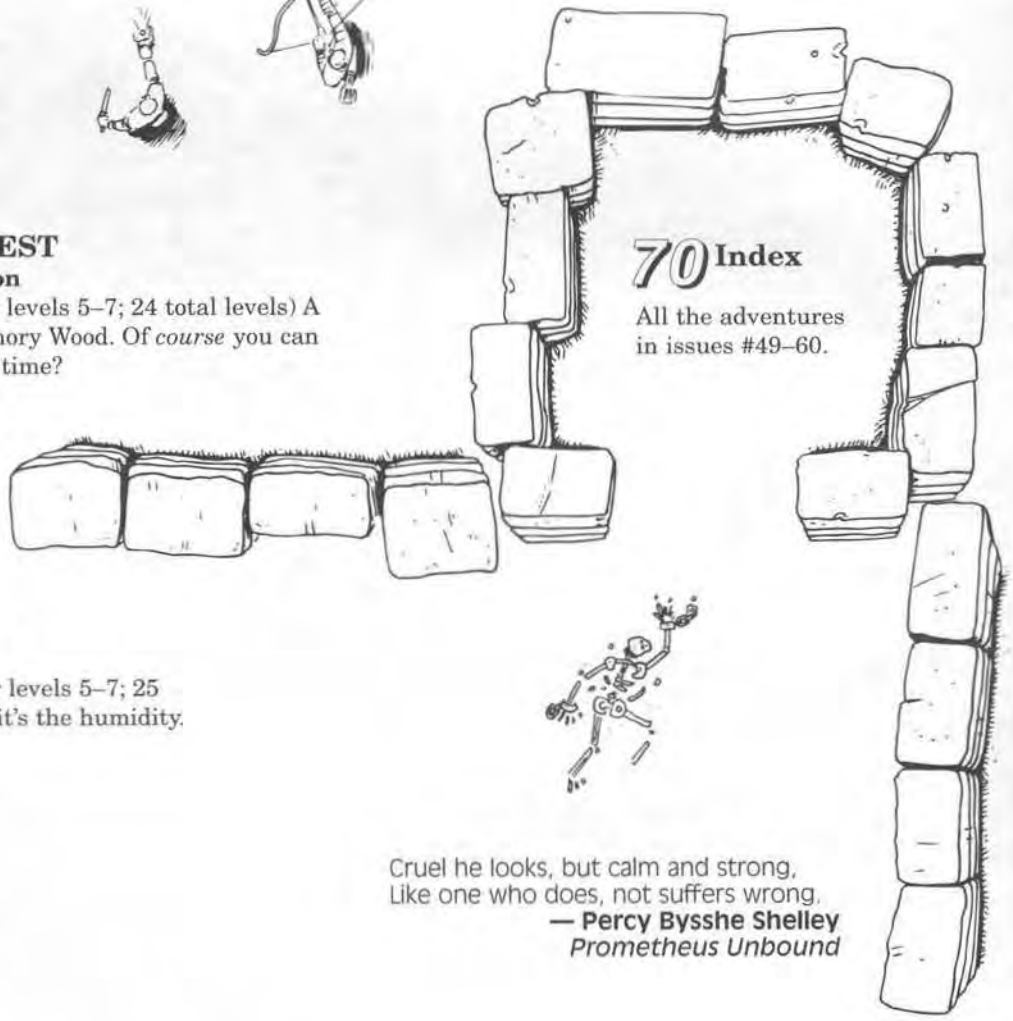


Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,
Like one who does, not suffers wrong.
— Percy Bysshe Shelley
Prometheus Unbound

JIGSAW

BY DAN DE FAZIO & CHRISTINA A. STILES

Mad, bad, and dangerous to know

Artwork by Tony DiTerlizzi
Cartography by Michael Scott

Christina writes: "I'm excited finally to be a part of the magazine I've enjoyed since its first issue. I'd like to thank my husband, Tracy, as well as Dan, Tim, Scott, and Calvin for seeing me through to publication. Thanks, guys!"

Dan points out that this represents the longest long-distance collaboration in DUNGEON® Adventures' *history. He and Christina live several states apart, have never met, have spoken on the telephone only a few times, and created "Jigsaw" entirely via the U.S. mail. How'd they meet? Through* DUNGEON Adventures, *which published Dan's address way back in issue #33.*

"Jigsaw" is a RAVENLOFT® adventure for 4–6 good-aligned PCs of levels 4–6 (30 total levels). This scenario takes place in the realm of Gothic Earth, from the *Masque of the Red Death* campaign, in the city of Lausanne, a large town in Switzerland, just north of Lake Geneva.

DMs without access to the *Masque of the Red Death* boxed set can restructure this adventure for traditional AD&D® or RAVENLOFT campaigns by setting the adventure in a large town near a mountainous region, replacing the *Masque* character classes with their AD&D counterparts (soldier = warrior, tradesman = rogue, adept = wizard, and mystic = cleric) and setting the money exchange rate to gold pieces. Also, because Gothic Earth is a low-magic setting, PCs with access to a great deal of magic may imbalance the adventure.

Adventure Background

Victoria von Lendstein is a young noblewoman of great intellect. Her father, Emile von Lendstein, was a physician known for his progressive thinking and somewhat Bohemian lifestyle. When Victoria was four, her mother died of a brain fever, so Emile raised his daughter alone. Instead of raising her as an ordinary noblewoman, educated only in husband-seeking and ballroom gaiety, he encouraged Victoria to be imaginative, studious, and creative, allowing her complete access to his library. Soon she had read all the books within, especially the medical texts. At 15, Victoria decided that she would be the first female physician in the city of Ingolstadt.

When Victoria applied to the University the masters were not pleased. Emile, however, had enough

influence to arrange for her to take the entrance exams. The school administration indulged Emile only because they expected Victoria to fail, putting an end to the matter. To their chagrin, young Victoria earned the highest score. Flabbergasted that a woman with no formal training could score so well on their exam, and having no recourse to prevent her entrance, they admitted Victoria.

Neither the students nor the faculty relished the idea of a female colleague. If women were allowed to be physicians, they mused, soon they could become lawyers, merchants, and even priests. Faced with this ominous scenario, the students and faculty conspired to make Victoria's academic career a nightmare. Her teachers tripled her workload, piling experiments and course work on her beyond her freshman status. The other students mocked her, tampered with her projects, stole her books, and carved obscene messages into the door and walls of her room.

After three months of torment, Victoria succumbed to their harassment and left the University. Determined that his gifted daughter would indeed become a physician, Emile personally initiated Victoria into the sciences of medicine, anatomy, and surgery. Victoria mastered each lesson in a trice. She was brilliant, and the knowledge she gained far outdistanced any she would have received at the University.

Then tragedy struck. A spark from an unattended fireplace ignited the parlor's carpeting, and fire spread throughout the magnificent von Lendstein mansion. In minutes, flames engulfed the entire home. Victoria escaped, but her father was not so fortunate. When the authorities dug his charred body from the rubble, a golden locket, amazingly untouched by the fire, was the only means of identifying her father's body. Victoria took the locket, within which Emile had kept her photograph, as a last memento.

Victoria begged the authorities to investigate further, attempting to convince them the fire was no accident but a malicious attack by the members of the University who did not approve of her studies. Her pleas came to no avail, and the authorities asserted that they had found no evidence of foul play.

Victoria took their seeming lack of concern as a sign that the police were in league with the University members, a fraternity of some sort. Believing the University's network ran deeper than she first suspected, she dropped the matter to pursue her own form of revenge: she would prove the University wrong by becoming the greatest physician of all time.

Armed with a few thousand inherited francs, Victoria purchased a small, dilapidated shop, which she converted to a home and laboratory. She bought as many medical texts as she could find. Her plan for greatness hinged on one important treasure she had procured from the library's furnace room during her stay at the University: a collection of red-inked papers on death and resurrection, the infamous *Frankenstein Papers* (see *A Guide to Gothic Earth,* page 111). The papers were stuffed inside the memoirs of Dr. Waldman, a former professor of the University. Someone had left them, along with several tomes on necrology, to be burned and forever hidden from curious minds.

It was rumored that Dr. Frankenstein, perhaps with some assistance from Dr. Waldman, had succeeded in resurrecting the dead, but none had ever witnessed the feat. Victoria assumed the experiment had not succeeded; otherwise, Dr. Frankenstein would have been celebrated in his time. Thus, she decided the experiment would be worthy of her effort. Once the University's professors viewed her successful creation, they would be forced to acknowledge her superior mind. Then they would grovel like animals, begging her to share her knowledge.

Toward this end, Victoria began scavenging limbs and organs from the gallows and charnel houses. With them, she stitched together a man as the papers outlined, injected him with a special serum, and created a primitive battery to infuse him with life. Though a year passed before her task was complete, success stood before her in the form of a living flesh golem, animated purely by scientific means — or so she believed.

Upon seeing her creation come to life, Victoria was filled not with the elation she had expected, but with disgust. This thing was not human. This patchwork grotesque — this jigsaw creation — that she had hoped would bring her fame would more likely bring about her persecution and condemnation. Frightened by that prospect, she led the child-like creature into a nearby forest, intending to end its life with a well-placed bullet. Yet when she looked into its pitiable yellow eyes, she was unable to squeeze the trigger. Instead, she turned to run. Before she could flee, the creature grabbed her by her cloak. Victoria wriggled out of its grasp and fled into the night, leaving the creature at the mercy of the elements.

Returning to her apartment, Victoria torched her notes and gathered her meager belongings. Departing at dawn, she fled to the town of Lausanne in Switzerland to live with her uncle and aunt, Albrecht and Elise von Thresher.

Days stretched into weeks, weeks into months. Elise von Thresher, Emile's sister, was far more traditional than Victoria's father, insisting that Victoria turn her attention to finding a proper husband. Still horrified by what she had done, Victoria didn't argue but resigned herself to the traditional woman's role her aunt proposed. She felt it might secure her peace of mind. In fact, it wasn't long before the attractive Victoria made the acquaintance of Gustav von Rudiger, a young nobleman whose family had strong political ties in the region. Gustav was kind, well mannered, and thoughtful. After six months of courtship, he asked her to marry him. Victoria happily accepted.

Then cruel fate intervened. While attending a performance of Dr. McGinnis's Traveling Marvels, an American freak show, Victoria spied the horrid object of her creation, and her heart nearly stopped.

It saw her, too.

For over a year, she had felt certain that the elements had claimed her unnatural creation, erasing her mistake forever. She was wrong. Victoria feigned illness, begging Gustav to take her home immediately. He hailed a coach, and the two sped away toward the posh neighborhood where Victoria and her family lived.

The creature saw the two leave together and became enraged. He pushed his way through the crowds and ran after them. His superhuman speed allowed him to keep up with the coach until it arrived at its destination. That night, as Victoria slept, the creature climbed through a window and entered her bedchamber.

Victoria awoke to find the creature's watery, yellow eyes peering down at her. She tried to scream, but the golem

Timeline of Events

November 3, 1891

12:00 A.M. PCs encounter Victoria and Udo in the park (**Scene 1**).

5:00 A.M. If the PCs track Udo to his lair, he flees to Dr. McGinnis's Freak Show (**Scene 4**). Otherwise, he is asleep in his lair.

12:00 P.M. A PC meets with Victoria (**Scene 2**).

November 4

3:00 A.M. Udo visits the room of one of the PCs to explain his situation (**Scene 5**).

3:30 A.M. Udo is back in his lair (**Scene 3**).

7:00 P.M. The Von Threshers leave for an evening at the opera. Victoria remains behind, awaiting the arrival of the PCs (**Scene 6**).

8:00 P.M. The PCs should arrive at the Von Thresher house (**Scene 6**).

11:30 P.M. Udo sneaks into the Von Thresher house and attacks, then flees for the mountain.

12:30 A.M. The Von Thresher family returns home.

November 5–15

Udo does not return. The PCs may use this time to rest and heal, or they may attempt to track Udo.

November 16

Udo arrives at the Von Rudiger chateau and sneaks inside. He hides in the attic overnight, preparing to terrorize Victoria (**Scene 7**).

November 17

8:00 A.M. Victoria and her family arrive at the Von Rudiger estate.

Noon The PCs arrive at the Von Rudiger chateau and are served a light meal. Other overnight guests begin to arrive.

2:00 P.M. Victoria and Gustav show the PCs the honeymoon cottage, located one mile north of the chateau. The PCs may begin preparing their traps.

6:00 P.M. Dinner is served in the PCs' rooms (the dining room is being prepared for the wedding). Snow begins to fall.

8:00 P.M. Winds begin in earnest. Snowfall transforms into a howling storm.

Midnight One of the PCs awakens to find Udo staring at him through his bedroom window. As suddenly as Udo appeared, he is gone.

November 18 (Wedding Day)

9:00 A.M. Victoria awakens to find a bouquet of lilies in her room, despite the fact that all the windows and doors were locked (**Scene 9**).

Noon Victoria and Gustav are married in the chateau's chapel (**Scene 9**).

1:00 P.M. The wedding reception begins (**Scene 9**).

5:00 P.M. Dinner is served. Victoria uncovers her meal to find a dead cat (**Scene 10**).

8:00 P.M. Dinner ends. Dancing begins (**Scene 11**).

10:30 P.M. Complaining of a headache, Justina, Victoria's cousin, leaves the ball and retires to her upstairs room. If the PCs are not watching Justina, Udo follows her to her room and murders her, then departs into the surrounding forest (**Scene 11**).

11:00 P.M. If Justina has been killed, Victoria discovers her body in her room. She and Gustav depart for their honeymoon cottage (**Scene 12**).

11:20 P.M. Udo attacks the coach while the couple is en route to the cottage (**Scene 12**).

clamped its gray, earthy hand over her mouth. To her surprise, the creature had no intention of killing her. Instead, he proclaimed his undying love and adoration for her, promising to forgive her for her actions if she would be his mate. Victoria tried to explain that she was already engaged to Gustav, but the creature would hear none of it.

In frustration, it replied, "Marry me, or I shall kill you both. None shall have you but I."

The monster gave Victoria a week to consider his proposal before departing through the window. Over the past several days, Victoria has been bombarded with love poetry and flowers from the unwavering golem. Victoria is terrified, but cannot confide in Gustav for fear that he will desert her when the truth is revealed. Nor can she turn to the authorities; they would lock her up as a madwoman.

Beginning the Adventure

The adventure begins on the seventh and final day of the creature's time allocation; Victoria is to meet him in the park in the center of town at midnight to give her decision. To involve the PCs in her plight, the DM should give them a reason to be in the park at this late hour so that they encounter the two arguing. It is suggested that the PCs have just exited an opera house not too far from the park, having gone to see the performance of Richard Strauss's *Don Juan*. The DM is free to devise another hook, adjusting the following text appropriately.

Scene 1: A Stroll in the Park

A light snows floats gently in the night breeze, chilling you with its playful touch. Though most of the opera's audience has scattered to their carriages, a few brave the chilly weather, ambling and chattering their way home.

A lone woman clad in a dark, hooded cloak walks ahead of you toward the park. Her stride is quick and sharp, and her boots click loudly on the cobblestone.

Gaslights guide your way to the park's snow-covered maze of vegetation. Ahead, the lone woman continues her brisk pace, then veers from the main road and proceeds down a ravine directly under the park's stone bridge.

Behind her, a dark shape emerges from the trees. The woman seems oblivious to its presence. Momentarily, both forms disappear from view.

If the PCs wish to observe the strange woman (Victoria von Lendstein) further, they must sneak to the edge of the ravine or to the bridge. Only PCs with the hide in shadows proficiency or an *invisibility* spell can move close enough to watch without being seen. Any approach by PCs who are not hiding or *invisible* is 50% likely to attract the woman's attention. Her visitor, Udo, has a keen sense of hearing, so non-thief, non-*invisible* characters are 85% likely to attract his attention. At the approach of strangers, Victoria starts, and Udo runs off into the night. If the PCs do not approach, however, and Udo is the only one to notice them, he stays long enough to hear Victoria's answer.

PCs successfully securing a closer position cannot overhear most of the conversation unless they possess the detect noise proficiency or have access to a *clairaudience* spell.

Read the following to any PC observing the ravine:

The woman stands in the ravine, just to the left of the stone bridge. Her hood is removed now, and you can see from the dim moonlight that she is an attractive brunette in her late twenties. She hugs her arms, trembling slightly as light snow settles upon her shoulders.

The large figure that followed her stands to her right, its features obscured by a dark cloak. The woman seems unnerved by his presence, but she quickly regains her composure. The two engage in a low, heated conversation that is inaudible from your position. The discussion continues for some minutes. Then, without warning, the figure strikes the woman across the face, knocking her to the ground.

"You have two more days to make your decision!" the figure bellows in a distinctly male voice. "At midnight on the second night I shall come to your family's townhouse for your answer. Already you waste too much of my time. You will be mine, or you will die," he thunders, then disappears with inhuman speed into the woods.The dark-haired woman lies sobbing on the cold ground, her head buried in her arms.

Any PCs unable to view the events in the ravine certainly hear Udo's booming voice before he disappears.

Because Udo's actions occur so quickly and unexpectedly, the PCs are surprised on a roll of a 1–5 on 1d10. The PCs are unable to prevent the slap Victoria receives, but they may be able to follow Udo. If the PCs follow him, they are hampered by the darkness, the thick underbrush, the falling snow, and Udo's quickness. A PC skilled in tracking suffers a –8 modifier to his Wisdom due to the snow and dim light. PCs using a light source decrease this modifier to –2. Additionally, the PCs' movement rate while tracking is slowed (see tracking proficiency, *PHB*). The PCs need to make at least three proficiency checks to maintain the trail. The DM should refer to the *DMG* for rules on pursuit and evasion of pursuit.

If Udo is followed, he flees to his lair (**Scene 3**). Otherwise, he circles back to spy on the PCs.

If the PCs approach Victoria, she rises quickly to her feet, backs away from the PCs, and looks for an escape route, as she at first assumes they are robbers and vagabonds. Once the PCs prove that their intentions are to help her, she wipes away her tears and smiles faintly, trying to pretend that nothing is wrong. If the PCs admit they witnessed the exchange between Victoria and the stranger, she breaks down in tears again.

"You must help me," she sobs. "I have no one else to turn to." Her fingers edge beneath her cloak and toward her neck, where she reveals a diamond necklace. "I offer you this if you can help me get rid of him. I... I have more jewelry if this is not sufficient," she sobs. If you will help me, one of you meet me at the Cathedral de Notre Dame tomorrow at noon. I have no time to explain now. It is late and I am very tired. And he may still be out there."

Udo, the Jigsaw Man

Udo, flesh golem, RAVENLOFT: AL N; AC 5; MV 12; HD 9 (40 hp); THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2d8; S 19, I 17, D 19, C 18; SD (+1 or better weapon to hit — see below); SZ M (6′4″); ML 20; PP 70, OL 97, FT 65, MS 88, HS 80, HN 30, CW 99; RL 5 *(Van Richten's Guide to the Created,* page 96). Proficiencies: climb walls, detect noise, disguise, hide in shadows, ventriloquism, move silently, and open locks.

Udo has the brain of a very intelligent scientist, the body of an athlete, and the hands of a master rogue. In addition to being extremely strong, Udo, unlike most flesh golems, is very agile and fast. He can withstand falls of up to 30′ without damage and can leap distances of 20′. Udo is also a master of disguise (at 6′4″ he is shorter than most golems, so he can pull this off) and an excellent mimic of voices. He finds these talents indispensable when forced to enter an urban environment.

Udo is immune to all cold and electrical attacks, though fire and acid cause normal damage. He is immune to toxins, disease, and any attacks regarding biological functions such as breathing or aging. He is also immune to mind-affecting magic such as *charm person* or *sleep*, and he receives a +4 to saves against magical assaults that cause harm (excluding cold or electrical attacks); failure to save indicates that he receives damage from such spells. Also, because Udo can be hit only by +1 or better weapons, which *Masque of the Red Death* characters have little access to, DMs should allow Udo a weakness. Though normal weapons don't harm him, the items used in his creation (mallets, scalpels, hammers, needles, etc. — items Victoria still possesses) can. One item per PC should exist, and DMs may allow that they inflict double damage, or that any damage received from these items is not repaired by Udo's regeneration abilities (see below). The metal from these items could be melted and formed into bullets. Fire is another weakness.

Udo can attack with both fists in the same round and, if successful, can begin strangling his victim during the next round. Strangulation causes 3d8 hp damage/round. The victim cannot escape unless he has a Strength of 19 or greater. Two people having at least a 17 Strength each can break his grip.

Udo recovers 1 hit point per hour and does not need to rest. If his hit points fall below 0, he ceases to heal, though his body is not dead but incapacitated. If 50% of his body remains intact, he can be repaired. Fire permanently destroys his body, so he has a great fear of it (must make a fear check at –2 when threatened with even small flames). If he is forced too close to flames, consult the fear check results table in the RAVENLOFT campaign set.

Udo is very cunning, and he prefers to survive by his wits rather than his strength. He attempts to avoid direct attacks. If Udo loses half his hit points, he flees combat, returning to fight again after he has healed and when his odds are better.

Udo lives deep within Lausanne's sewers, in a lair to which he returns whenever wounded. His extensive knowledge of Lausanne's sewers allows him to appear anywhere in the city at any time.

Udo has a telepathic bond with his creator. Though Victoria cannot sense the thoughts or emotions of her creation, she can keep no desires, fears, dreams, or feelings from him. At will, he can see through her eyes, and he always knows in which direction she lies, enabling him to track her wherever she goes. He can also "speak" into her mind at will, regardless of range *(Van Richten's Guide to the Created,* page 31).

When Victoria abandoned him outside of Ingolstadt, her cloak, held tightly in Udo's grasp, was ripped free as she fled. Inside the cloak's pockets, Udo found Victoria's diary and a locket containing her picture. He has long cherished the picture of the beautiful Victoria, but he was not able to decipher the writing in the diary until encountering Doctor McGinnis. Unaffected by his horrid appearance, the Doctor and his freaks did not attempt to kill him as did the mob in Ingolstadt when he tried to track Victoria there. In fact, they treated him like family, and Doctor McGinnis even taught him how to read (guided him in remembering how to read, actually), enabling him to read Victoria's diaries and learn the truth behind his existence.

His instincts (telepathy) told him that Victoria had gone to Lausanne to live, so he convinced the Doctor that the freak show should pay a visit there. The Doctor agreed, and Udo was indeed able to find Victoria. Because Udo has experienced love and acceptance from the Doctor and the freaks, he does not hate people as do most of his kind. This is the reason he believes he can convince Victoria to see past his appearance and into his heart. She must have loved him once, he thinks, or she would not have labored so long and hard to create him.

Should a PC recover Victoria's locket from Udo's lair, the item is a *zeitgeber*, something that triggers a reaction in Udo. Upon seeing the open locket, he is stunned for 1d4 rounds as he stares at Victoria's picture and remembers the night she abandoned him.

The necklace Victoria offers as payment is worth 2,000 francs. If the PCs attempt to haggle, she agrees to discuss the details and answer any questions tomorrow. If the PCs offer to escort her home, she gladly accepts. The escort consists of a five-minute walk to the posh North Quarter. If the PCs do not walk her home, Victoria runs from the park as quickly as she can, looking back over her shoulder as she does so.

If Udo wasn't pursued, he follows any PCs accompanying Victoria to see that they do not harm her. He is curious about Victoria's proposal to them and attempts to follow one of the weaker-looking PCs home.

Victoria von Lendstein, physician (physician): AL N; AC 10; MV 12; HD 5; hp 19; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (dagger); D 18, I 18, Ch 16; ML 15. Nonweapon Proficiencies: medicine, biology, chemistry, electricity, etiquette, dancing, and languages: German (native), English, French, Latin, and Spanish.

Victoria is 5′5″ with wavy dark hair. Once fiery and ambitious, her experiments and their repercussions have left her drained, and she longs for the quiet life. Victoria would rather die than have Gustav or her family discover the truth about Udo. As the creature would not accept her offer to construct him a mate (the insult for which he slapped her), Victoria feels she has no recourse other than to kill him. She hopes the PCs will do this for her. If not, she attempts it herself.

Scene 2: The Meeting

Read the following to the PC who meets with Victoria at the Cathedral:

> Snow falls lightly, continuing its dance from the previous night. While you await the woman from the park, you gaze at the sky-bound spires and stunning rose windows of the Cathedral de Notre Dame. Lausanne's citizens bustle past. Only one, a fragile woman bundled in a gray, hooded overcoat, stops to stare at the cathedral with you. "Magnificent, is it not? I suppose you have to be an outsider to appreciate its splendor," she remarks, nodding toward the oblivious passersby.
>
> "I am Victoria von Lendstein," she says. A nasty bruise darkens her face.
>
> She smiles faintly. "I hope you haven't been waiting long. I was trying not to be followed. Likely, he's here already, nearby somewhere, watching..."
>
> She glances in every direction before continuing:
>
> "As you are here, I assume you are interested in my proposal, so I'll be brief. If you decline my request, I ask only that you refrain from speaking about it.
>
> "I am to be married in two weeks to Gustav von Rudiger, a gentleman of one of Lausanne's noblest families; yet I am pursued by another. Normally, I would be flattered by such attention, but this would-be suitor is no normal man." She produces a folded yellow paper from her coat pocket and hands it to you.
>
> It is an advertisement for Dr. McGinnis's Traveling Marvels. Drawings of several odd characters appear on the flyer: a woman with snakes and tattoos, a two-headed man, and a man with a stitched and scarred face. Several similar posters hang on every city block.
>
> "Over a week ago, Gustav and I visited an American freak show. While there, we happened upon one of Dr. McGinnis's 'attractions,' the so-called 'Jigsaw Man.'" Victoria points to the scarred man in the drawing. You can't tell much from the picture, but he seems quite hideous.
>
> "The sight of him chilled my bones; I was so horrified I begged Gustav to rush me home. The freak must have followed us, for that night he broke into my bedroom and awakened me.
>
> "I thought he had come to kill me for gawking at him, but instead he professed his love for me. I told him of my engagement to Gustav, but he would not listen. Before he left, he promised he would kill Gustav and me if I would not consent to his wishes, and he gave me a week to decide. For the past seven days, he has sent bouquets of flowers, numerous trinkets, and frightful love poems. Last night my week was up, and I met him in the park to give him my answer.
>
> "Fortunately, he didn't kill me but gave me two more days to decide. As he is a large and unstable man, I'm sure that I have only two days to live... unless you help me. Gustav is away on business and is not due to return until the wedding, so I do not fear for him.
>
> "As I said, this matter is confidential. If you accept, you and your associates must act with discretion. As payment, I will give you the necklace and an additional 500 francs to protect me. He is quite unstable, so he may try to kill you for helping me.
>
> "Will you?"

If the PC asks Victoria why she has not informed the police about this matter, she says that she doesn't want to besmirch the Von Rudiger and Von Thresher family names by becoming the laughing stock of Lausanne's rumor mill. The matter must be handled discreetly. If she is asked about the slap she received, she says the freak did not like her response to his request. She can be haggled to 750 francs. If the PC can *detect lie*, he finds that Victoria is telling the truth (not the *whole* truth, but the truth, nonetheless).

If the PCs accept her offer, she tells them that she intends to return to the von Thresher home and remain there until Udo comes for her tomorrow night, so it isn't necessary to watch her this evening, as the monster hasn't lied to her to date. She asks the PCs to meet at her house around 8:00 P.M. tomorrow night. Her family is going to a late concert, and the PCs may be able to plan a trap for the man. In the meantime, she suggests they find more information as to his whereabouts at the freak show.

If a PC can read her mind, he finds her thoughts filled with the fear of being ripped to shreds by her stalker. She is afraid but calm, almost as if she were resigned to this fate.

Scene 3: Udo's Lair

This encounter occurs only if the PCs track Udo to his lair. Otherwise, skip to the next appropriate scene.

As the PCs have invaded Udo's home, he fights to defend it and himself. Regardless of when this encounter occurs, Udo soon afterward visits one of the PCs to tell his side of the story if he has not already. (See **Scene 5.**)

Read or paraphrase the following to any players whose PCs have tracked Udo through Lausanne:

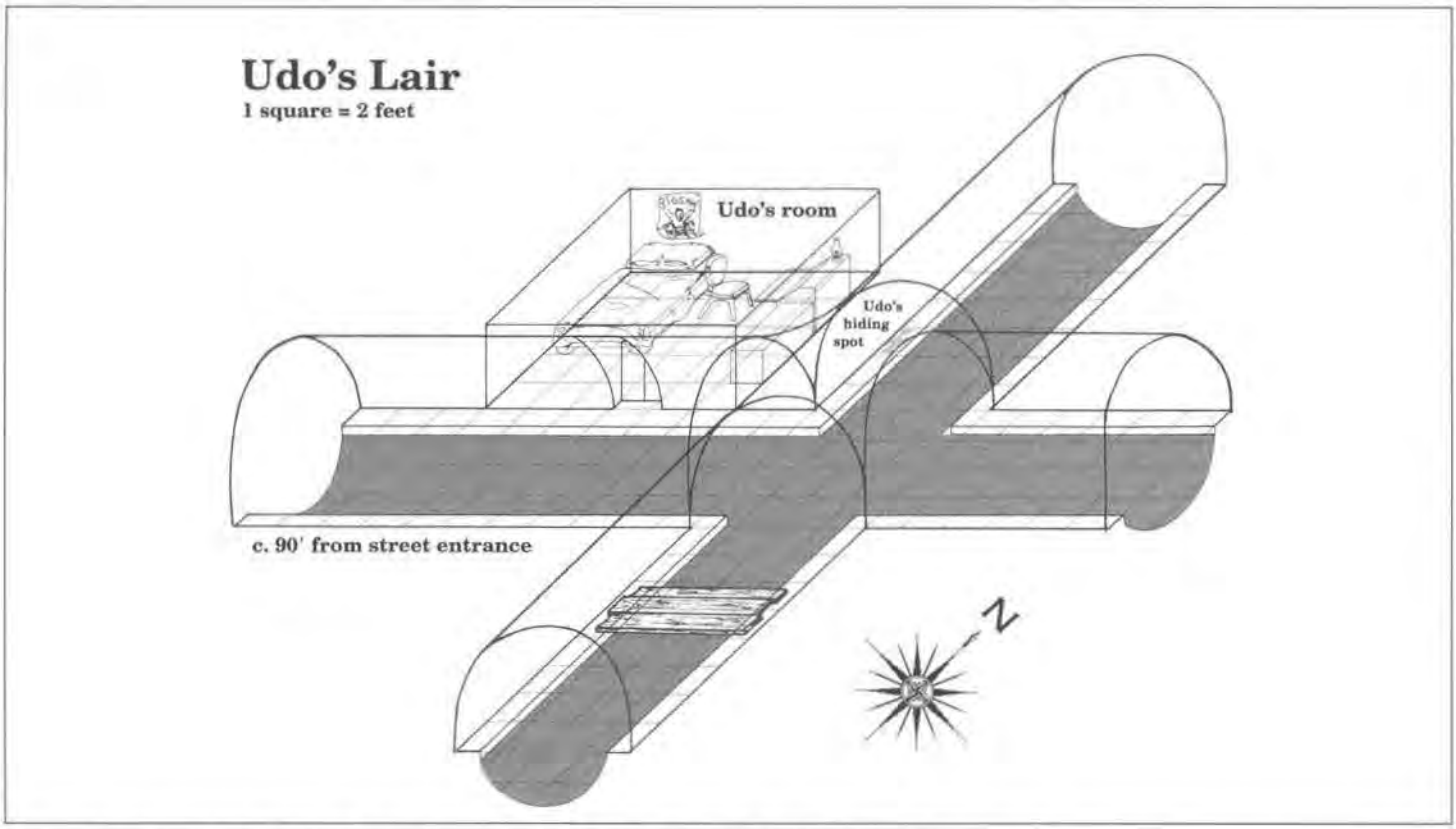
> The trail dead ends into an alley on the southwest side of Lausanne, and the man is nowhere to be seen. A manhole cover lies slightly ajar, six feet in front of you. Faint footprints disappear in front of it.

The PCs need a combined Strength of 18 to pry open the manhole. When the hole is uncovered, each PC must save vs. poison at +2 or become ill. Any PC failing the save suffers a –2 penalty to hit due to uncontrollable vomiting. A light source is necessary to navigate the sewers.

> As the manhole cover is removed, a terrible stench wafts from below. An iron ladder stretches thirty feet into the tunnel. Its rungs are slick with slime and moisture, but you carefully descend its length. Once at the bottom, your light source reveals a round tunnel, eight feet high and eight feet across, running east and west. Rats, some the size of small dogs, dart in all directions, scurrying away from the light. A river of filth runs along its bottom and a one-foot ledge hugs both sides of the tunnel, providing a slimy if precarious means of traversing the sewers. Every five hundred feet down the tunnel to either side is a makeshift bridge of wooden planks.

If the PCs proceed at half their movement rate, they do not slip into the muck. A saving throw vs. paralyzation (at –2 if running) is required by PCs proceeding at a faster rate. Failure indicates that the PC has fallen into the filth.

PCs falling into the 3'-deep river of sewage are not injured but smell horrible for 24 hours. Even bathing does not alleviate the stench entirely, and any clothes worn by the falling PC are ruined and must be thrown away, preferably burned. If the PC continues to wear the foul clothing, his Charisma should be adjusted by –6. The PC must



also make another saving throw vs. poison at +2 or become ill, suffering a –2 to hit in combat. Additionally, any PC falling into the sewage with an open wound is 50% likely to contract a disease (dysentery, cholera, typhoid fever, jaundice, etc.).

In game terms, contracting a disease takes at least a week to have an effect on the PC. At the end of the week, the PC feels sluggish, suffering a –1 to Dexterity, a –1 to hit, and a –1 to Constitution. These effects are doubled for every week the disease is left untreated. When the PC's Constitution reaches 0, the PC dies.

The makeshift bridges along the tunnel are not the sturdiest means of crossing the river as the planks have become rotten with age. Anyone walking on the planks has a 30% chance of falling through them. This percentage is cumulative if multiple PCs cross them simultaneously. Any PC jumping to the other side of the tunnel must make a successful Dexterity check or fall into the sludge.

Magical light sources are safest when traveling through the sewers. There is a 5% cumulative chance per torch or lantern burning per turn that the PCs ignite a methane pocket. The result of such an encounter is a sudden, loud explosion. Each PC suffers 1d8 hp damage and is struck deaf for two full turns. In addition, all nonmagical light sources extinguish. The DM may warn the PCs about the dangers of carrying an open flame in the sewers or may choose to let them discover this for themselves.

Udo's Lair

Udo's lair lies almost a mile to the east of the sewer entrance, near an intersection of two main tunnels. It used to be a safe house for thieves. When Udo decided to quit the freak show to pursue his love, he went underground to hide. Read the following:

> At the eastern end of the tunnel, almost a mile from where you first entered, a seven-foot-tall, heavily dented, metal door rests along the left wall. A faint yellow light filters out from underneath the door.

When the the PCs open the unlocked door, read or paraphrase the following description:

> The metal door swings noisily open and the light from within brightens, spilling out into the tunnel. A few rats scatter from the noise. No one is inside. A makeshift cot lies along the north wall. A poster advertising Doctor McGinnis's Traveling Marvels hangs on the wall above it. A desk, a chair, and a bookcase lie on the east side of the room. A lit oil lamp and an open newspaper, several days old, sit upon the desk.

The room's floor is coated with slime, and the stench inside is as nauseating as the tunnels.

Udo's mattress is covered in body lice, and any PC searching it has a 40% chance of acquiring them. Any PC acquiring the lice who fails to seek treatment becomes infected with a bacterial disease that grows inside the cells lining the blood and lymph vessels. The PC suffers a rash, a fever, and other flu-like symptoms (–1 to Constitution for every week left untreated). When the PC's Constitution reaches 0, he dies. Nonmagical treatments are 75% effective. There is nothing of value in or under the cot's mattress. The poster above the cot heralds the

"Jigsaw Man" as the headlining act of Dr. McGinnis's freak show.

The desk drawers contain papers and writing supplies. The papers are half-finished poems to Victoria. They suggest an intelligent and educated author, but the verses contain an underlying sense of threat in addition to the usual romantic protests and entreaties.

The bookshelves contain poetry by Keats and Shelley; some existential works by Søren Kierkegaard (*Either/Or* and *Stages on Life's Way*) and Friederich Nietzsche (*The Birth of Tragedy*); and the diaries of Victoria and Udo von Lendstein (Udo took his creator's last name as his own, though the PCs may assume that the two are related). The *Frankenstein Papers* are hidden behind Kierkegaard's *Either/Or*. The locket Victoria recovered from her father's body and subsequently lost to Udo in the woods is inserted in the middle of Victoria's diary like a bookmark.

Anyone touching the shelves discovers they are coated with a colorless, greasy substance (oil).

Udo has spread the oil here as a trap for any intruders. The trail of oil extends from the room to his hiding spot around the corner (marked with an X on Udo's Lair Map). The slime on the room's floor and on the walkway outside the room makes the presence of the oil practically undetectable. Anyone actively searching the floor has a 1-in-6 chance of seeing it.

Five minutes after all or most of the PCs have entered the room, Udo ignites the trail by smashing a lit lantern onto the oil. If the PCs are standing watch outside the door, they should roll a 1d10 for surprise. Any unsurprised PC may attack with a missile weapon (if in hand).

Surprised PCs (those inside the room and within 5′ of the entrance) suffer 1d6 hp damage. Unsurprised PCs save for half damage. PCs exiting Udo's room suffer an additional 1d6 hp damage.

The fire burns for a total of six rounds, consuming everything left in the room (except the *Frankenstein Papers*). Each round the fire burns, there is a 20% chance of igniting the methane-filled air surrounding the PCs. When the fire begins, Udo leaves via the north tunnel and heads to the surface. Unsurprised PCs, PCs with the tracking proficiency (–5 modifier due to the slime), and PCs possessing magical tracking ability may attempt to follow Udo. If Udo is not pursued, he spends the night at the freak show; otherwise, he travels the city throughout the night, trying to avoid pursuit.

Any books or papers picked up by the PCs are 40% likely to have caught on fire from Udo's attack. A burning book requires a saving throw vs. normal fire (19 for paper) to remain intact. If the PCs escape with Victoria's (or Udo's) diary, they may learn the truth of Udo's existence. If so, they may desire to confront Victoria with the truth at the Von Thresher house the night of the trap (or at **Scene 2**, if they tracked Udo from the park). If confronted with this, Victoria does not deny it. She does, however, offer them more money to stay on. How the PCs react to this information will definitely affect the outcome of this adventure (see **Moral Dilemma**).

Scene 4: The Freak Show

At some point, the PCs may visit the freak show to learn more about the "Jigsaw Man." The show runs three times daily: 10–11 A.M., 2–3 P.M, and 5–6 P.M. At any given time, 5d10 people are present. People arriving between or during shows are offered the chance to buy souvenirs and pamphlets describing the freaks but are not allowed entrance to the tent until the next showing. Admission costs one franc per person for the general showing and an additional franc each for the main attraction: Mr. Electrico.

If the PCs approach during business hours, read the following:

> The freak show, Dr. McGinnis's Traveling Marvels, is located on the edge of town and is nearly at the end of its engagement. A ramshackle red and green tent rises from the center of several multi-colored wagons. On each wagon are paintings depicting the show's various acts: a bearded woman, a contortionist, a sword swallower, dwarves, a two-headed giant, etc. A man wearing a top hat and a striped suit stands beneath the freak show's red announcement banner. He cries out to the gathering crowd: "See Dr. McGinnis's amazing freaks of nature brought to you directly from the United States of America. They will SHOCK you! They will HORRIFY you! They will THRILL you!

The *Frankenstein Papers*

The *Frankenstein Papers* are a tainted magical item. Professor Waldman, a powerful adept and member of the Order of the Endless Night, a qabal in league with the Red Death, rewrote Victor Frankenstein's papers in his own blood (thus the red ink) as part of a spell ritual. By doing so, he was able to ensorcel the papers with the power to implant an obsession in the mind of the reader. Waldman intended to spread the paper throughout Ingolstadt's University, inspiring the students there to create more creatures like Frankenstein's.

Unfortunately for him, the spell incited madness in the professor. Though he was able to complete the papers, he committed suicide by leaping from the University to his death just seven days after the ritual. By this time, he had already placed the papers into one of his books in the library to be picked up by curious students. His plan did not have a chance to succeed, however, as the deans of the University requested Waldman's works be removed from the library and burned to prevent any students from likewise becoming mad by the strange man's ideas.

The papers were discovered by Victoria during her stay at University. She read them and became obsessed with creating a golem. When they fell into Udo's hands, he likewise read them, but they did not affect him due to his immunity to mind-affecting spells.

If a scientist, physician, or adept PC reads the manuscript, he must save vs. spell or become obsessed with raising the dead as well. The idea sprouts like a seed, taking full root within 4–7 weeks, whereupon the PC begins spending all his time walking the graveyards in search of fresh corpses. If not stopped, the PC will succeed in completing a golem like Udo in a matter of months. If PCs of another class read the papers, they must make madness checks, as they do not possess the knowledge or skills to create a golem. A successful save indicates the PC is not adversely affected.

The papers cannot be destroyed by acid or fire. Many qabals would like to get their hands on these papers.

Encountering the Authorities

If the police are summoned in this adventure, 2–5 (1d4+1) officers arrive on the scene, unless otherwise noted. These officers are 1st-level soldiers and have 5 hp each. Anyone arrested is fined 25 francs for a first offense, 50 francs for a second, and 75 francs for a third offense. Minor offenses such as brawling usually require an overnight stay in jail in addition to any fines. A fourth offense requires a day in jail and a hearing before a magistrate. Anyone found guilty is required to spend 2d10 additional days in jail.

If the PCs confront the police about Victoria's problem, the authorities send 2–5 officers to help capture, not kill, Udo, if the PCs can convince them that lives are in danger. If the PCs tell them about Udo's creation (if they know at this point), the authorities cannot arrest Victoria for performing necromancy, as it did not occur within their jurisdiction, nor are they likely to believe such a story.

Udo fights to the death to prevent being captured. If he is captured, stories about the incident hit the papers. The stories are 75% likely to disgrace the Von Rudiger and Von Thresher family names. If they do not, the wedding continues as planned; otherwise, the wedding is called off , and Victoria flees the country. The PCs become enemies of the Von Thresher and Von Rudiger families for life, along with Dr. McGinnis and his freaks, who go out of their way to attack individual PCs. The DM may also have the freaks attempt a rescue of Udo from the jail. If they succeed, Udo's first action is to find the PCs and kill them.

The repercussions of police intervention in this adventure are many and varied; as such, they cannot be fully covered here.

An amazing collection of ODDITIES from around the world — DOCTOR MCGINNIS'S TRAVELING MARVELS! A mere franc is all it costs, Ladies and Gentlemen. A bargain you can't afford to miss. Step right up. Step right up!"

To the left of the hawker, a tattooed woman with vipers encircling her forearms sways back and forth on a 4′ platform to the music of a flute. Her accompanist is an 8′-tall, two-headed man (Garth/Barth the ettin, a genuine freak) dressed in blue Arabian pantaloons, a matching vest, and two bright yellow turbans. To the hawker's right, two 3′-tall dwarves in black suits stand upon a ticket booth. One sells tickets, while the other sells framed pictures of the show's freaks.

Away from the show's entrance, a man is painting a wagon. The word "Jigsaw" remains uncovered by his new painting of a man sitting in an electric chair. A jittery man in a blue body suit with a large, yellow lightning bolt down the back supervises the work. His costume is the same as that of the man in the new painting.

If the PCs pay to see the show, they are given a tour by Dr. McGinnis himself, a tall, thin man dressed in a long jacket, a black cowboy hat, and boots with spurs. His voice is soft and conspiratorial as he begins his theatrical presentation:

"Ladies and Gentleman, the sights you are about to see are not for the faint of heart. I have traveled far and wide to bring you the world's most amazing creatures, creatures the likes of which science cannot begin to explain. Should you become ill at the sight of them, please exit the tent discreetly so as not to alarm some of the more... dangerous exhibits. The more savage ones are, of course, in chains. When excited, however, they become incredibly strong, and no bonds can hold them."

"My intention is not to scare you, dear patrons. It is to entertain and educate. To enhance your safety, several capable guards are stationed within. Careful and slow movements will best avoid irritating the exhibits and preclude need of these guards.

"If you are ready, let us proceed." He swings a long arm toward the tent's entrance.

Inside, the tent is dark, except for a few lanterns hanging from the tent posts. A 10′-wide roped walkway, with heavy, red curtains to either side, extends the length of the tent. Ropes for unveiling the exhibits hang from the ceiling at 12′ intervals. Three bald, heavily muscled men with cutlasses at their sides stand at various posts.

Dr. McGinnis tells the crowd the history of each exhibit before he pulls the rope, revealing the amazing oddity within. Most of the freaks perform a song, dance, recite poetry, or merely wander about ferociously on stage for the three minutes the curtain is held open. Almost an hour is spent viewing and hearing about the nine general exhibits: a bearded woman named Lady Olga (fake); a troupe of five singing and dancing Chinese midgets (real); a ferocious, chained lion man (fake); two small, dark-skinned men in loincloths touted as the "Wild Men of Borneo" (fake); Princess Garvanna from Atlantis, a mermaid (fake); Sir Charles Roberts, an armless man who sips coffee with the aid of his feet (real); Thin Freddy, a contortionist (real); Franco the sword-swallower (real); and Mexic, a pinhead and lone ancestral survivor of the ancient Aztec civilization (fake).

As the PCs near the end of the roped pathway, one curtain remains closed.

"I have one more oddity to share, and he is stranger in truth than all the others yet revealed."

He grabs the rope to the last curtain. "Because this exhibit has strained my pockets severely to bring to your town, I require the additional deposit of one franc." The three armed men from the posts amble to Dr. McGinnis's side.

"Those who wish to see this wondrous spectacle should give my companions your coin. Those who have seen enough, I bid you a good day."

If the PCs stay to see the last display, Mr. Electrico (real), read or paraphrase the following:

"Direct from New York City, I present Mr. Electrico." He pulls the curtain aside to reveal the man in the blue body suit you saw earlier. He is seated in an enormous wooden chair, a metal bowl perched atop his head. Wires and tubes extend from the bowl to the length of his arms. The giant, two-headed man from the entrance stands behind him, his hand on a switch.

"Struck by lightning seven times by age ten, Mr. Electrico can withstand extreme currents of electricity! A normal man would be killed instantly by one-tenth the voltage we are about to send through his body."

Dr. McGinnis motions for the two-headed man to flip the switch. A loud sizzling, snapping sound ensues, and

Mr. Electrico's body jerks back and forth. His face contorts in agony and his white hair extends out in every direction. The two-headed man holds down the switch for well over a minute before releasing it. Mr. Electrico's body sizzles to a halt. He remains still, eyes closed. Then, miraculously, his eyes open, and he rises slowly. The crowd around you gasps. Mr. Electrico laughs maniacally, then jumps off the stage. Still laughing, he runs out the exit.

"Thank you all for coming. I hope you've enjoyed the show. Have a good day," says the Doctor as he walks out the exit. His muscle men surround the pathway and begin pushing stragglers out of the tent.

If the PCs don't care to see the show but desire to see Dr. McGinnis, they are granted their request for a sum of 10 francs. A convincing journalist PC may have the fee waived by saying he is doing a story on the Doctor and his show. The audience is granted between shows or after the last one, depending upon when the PCs arrive. Refusal to pay, if required, results in the PCs' being asked to leave the grounds. This can be voluntary or forced (see the Muscle Men's statistics below).

Unannounced PCs caught sneaking around the tent and wagons are attacked by the muscle men, Franco the sword-swallower, the two-headed man, and Serpentina (see statistics below), especially after dark; if this isn't enough force to remove the PCs, the other performers and laborers assist. The freaks handle their own security, but an all-out brawl brings the police to the freak show within six rounds. Dr. McGinnis does not fight unless personally attacked.

If the PCs are allowed an audience with Dr. McGinnis, Franco remains with him at all times. Read or paraphrase the following:

The inside of Dr. McGinnis's wagon is dark even though thin shafts of light creep through the wagon's narrow shudders. Dr. McGinnis is seated at the far end of the wagon behind a makeshift desk. His western attire is as dark as the room, a sharp contrast to the white hair that juts from

Freak Show Members' Statistics:

Franco, sword-swallower: AL N; AC 10(7); MV 12; Tradesman (performer) 5; hp 27; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA +1 damage; S 17, D 17; saber (carries several), dagger, and club.

Franco is extremely loyal to Dr. McGinnis and obeys his every command. He is also in love with Serpentina and attempts to kill anyone who harms her.

Garth/Barth (two-headed man — ettin): AL CN; AC 3; HD 6 (unusually small, 8' tall); hp 35; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8/1d10 + weapon; SD Surprised only on a 1; I 5; XP 2,300.

The ettin is another one of Dr. McGinnis's truly strange freaks. Doctor McGinnis discovered Garth/Barth hiding in the North Carolina mountains. Dr. McGinnis took the creature, a mere starving child, into his care, taught him how to speak, clothed and fed him, and offered him friendship as well as a job. Though not very bright, Garth/Barth is loyal and does everything within his power to protect the Doctor and his friends. He avoids contact with the PCs.

Mister Electrico: AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; Tradesman (performer) 4; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD immune to electricity; dagger, club.

Mr. Electrico has been with the freak show for over a year, though not as a performer. When Udo left, Dr. McGinnis offered him Udo's position as the headlining act, a role he has filled for over a week now. Mr. Electrico's talent lies in being able to withstand high voltages of electrical current. After his performances, he is rattled and cannot hold a coherent conversation. His body jerks spasmodically at times and spittle flows freely from his mouth. More often than not, he can be found running about the wagons, laughing insanely.

Within an hour after his performance, Mr. Electrico regains his senses. He knows the following about Udo: he resigned a week ago; he writes beautiful poetry; and he still visits Dr. McGinnis, dropping by one or two times a week.

Laborers (15): AL N; AC 10; MV 12, Tradesman (laborer) 1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; club, dagger. The laborers join any fights only as a last alternative. They prefer to stand on the sidelines and take bets, shunning any questions as they fear for their jobs.

Muscle Men (Hanzric, Galdric, and Dalric — brothers): AL CN; AC 10; Soldiers 3; hp 24, 20, 19; THAC0 18; Dmg by weapon type; SA +1 damage; S 17; army pistol, dagger, cutlass.

The muscle men are the first to enter any fray, as they love to fight. They won't talk to the PCs about anything, unless they are first defeated in a fair fist fight. If the PCs defeat them, they gain their respect and meager knowledge: Udo left the show, he's living somewhere in Lausanne's sewers, and he visits with Doctor McGinnis to discuss philosophy.

Painter: AL N; AC 10; MV 12, Tradesman (laborer) 1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; club, dagger.

The painter is a hired laborer, not a member of the freak show. He is irritated by Mr. Electrico's need to supervise his work. He is closemouthed, desiring only to finish his job, get paid, and get drunk at the local bar. If given a bribe of at least five francs, he confirms seeing the "Jigsaw Man" two days ago, hanging around Dr. McGinnis's wagon.

Performers (15): AL N; AC 10; MV 12; Tradesman (performer) 2; hp 8, 7, 9, 10, 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; club, dagger, hand axe.

Serpentina, mistress of reptiles: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; Tradesman (performer) 4; hp 18; THAC0 19; #AT 1 (or by weapon type); Dmg by weapon type; SD pet snakes; hand axe, dagger, and saber.

Serpentina is Austrian and one of the freak show's better fighters. She is highly suspicious of everyone, including her coworkers, and she is not open to questions. She associates only with Dr. McGinnis and her paramour, Franco. She knows Udo has left the show and occasionally comes to see the Doctor, but she won't share this knowledge. If pressured for information, she throws her snakes on the PCs and draws her saber while yelling for the others to join her.

Boa Constrictor: AL N; AC 6; MV 9; HD 3+1; THAC0 17; hp 28; #AT 2; Dmg 1/1d3; SA constriction; ML 15; XP 175.

Vipers (4): AL N; AC 5; MV 15; HD 2+1; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 0 (defanged); ML 8; XP 175 each.

beneath his black cowboy hat. His feet are kicked up on the desk as he puffs a Cuban cigar.

Seated on the desk in front of him is a muscular man in his mid-twenties, clad in tight-fitting, black leather clothing. He holds a sword in his hand, admiring the blade, and wears several smaller ones around his belt. Both men eye you suspiciously.

"Good day," says the old man after a moment of silence. "I am Doctor McGinnis." His voice is low and soft. You see now that his blue eyes are as wild as his white hair. "This is Franco, my assistant. What can I do for you fine folks?"

Doctor Bailey McGinnis: ex-physician and freak show owner: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; Tradesman (physician/performer) 6; hp 25; THAC0 18; #AT 1 (or by weapon type); Dmg by weapon type; army pistol (2), derringer, and dagger.

Doctor McGinnis is a former physician who dabbles in the occult. Once a promising surgeon, the good doctor's medical license was revoked after he was caught robbing graves. After losing his practice, he joined his great uncle, James (McGinnis) Bailey of the Barnum & Bailey Circus on a tour of the United States. He found Barnum's attempts at freak foolery blasphemous, so he left the troupe in the 1870s to form a show of his own. His desire was to compete against the great showman by finding irrefutable "freaks of nature" to attract and educate the populace. After a time, however, he admitted to himself that truth and money often did not go hand in hand, so he reverted to using Barnum's tricks of the trade, though sparingly (fake exhibits are indicated earlier).

Udo, the "Jigsaw Man," was his greatest attraction to date, and the scientific truth behind Udo's existence astounded him. Yet, Dr. McGinnis does not look at Udo as one of the freaks. Udo is a friend, much like Franco. He has enjoyed instructing Udo in reading, writing, and learning in general. Though the golem has left his employ, they still meet to discuss philosophy and great works of literature. He cannot understand how Udo's creator could abandon such a magnificent creature.

Dr. McGinnis answers the PCs' questions truthfully as long as he doesn't think they mean to harm Udo. He says that Udo worked at the freak show but quit over a week ago to pursue a personal matter. He has seen him off and on, but his visits are unplanned. He was a good worker, never complained, and his act consisted merely of displaying himself to the horrified public.

Of course, if the Doctor answers the PCs' questions, he expects them to answer some of his. He wants to know whether Udo is in any trouble and why the PCs are inquiring about him. If the PCs imply a threat to Udo, McGinnis asks them point-blank whether they intend to harm his friend. If the PCs don't answer his questions, he refuses to answer any more of theirs, telling them to leave immediately and not to return.

Unless Udo is captured or specifically requests his assistance, the Doctor does not interfere in the matter. If Udo is killed, the loss of his friend creates a bitterness in the Doctor's heart, and he loses his love for showmanship, selling his show to Franco within a year after Udo's death. If he learns the PCs are responsible, he vows to kill them. His dabblings in the occult are bringing him closer to the Red Death's control; Udo's death seals his fate.

If Udo is currently fleeing from the PCs, he may be hidden in a secret compartment under the floor of Dr. McGinnis's wagon (only if the PCs found his lair — 25% chance he is in the wagon). The secret compartment can be found by anyone making a thorough

search of the car, but Dr. McGinnis will not allow such a search. If the PCs attempt to search the wagon or the grounds by force, the Doctor and Franco fight them while Serpentina rallies the rest of the forces. Any large brawl attracts the authorities, who arrive within six rounds. Unless the PCs can provide solid evidence of wrongdoing on behalf of the freak show, the police arrest the PCs for starting a riot. They are fined and jailed according to the number of offenses they have committed.

Scene 5: A Visit to the PCs

If Udo succeeded in following a weak-looking PC home from **Scene 1**, he enters the PC's room at midnight to tell his side of the story. His intention is to win the PC's sympathy and to gain his assistance in coaxing Victoria into marrying him.

Udo uses his rogue proficiencies to break into the PC's room while he sleeps. The PC chosen should be either isolated from the others, physically weak, or both. This encounter assumes that the PCs are staying at an inn or some type of house with separate rooms. It also assumes that the PCs have not taken any precautions against intruders, such as watches or doubling room occupancy. If the PCs sleep in groups, Udo strikes at some other time when his chosen victim is alone. If he is attacked while breaking in, he flees.

This encounter should occur before the planned stakeout at Victoria's. If Udo encounters the PC in some place other than a bedroom, modify the following text accordingly:

> You are awakened with a start as a callused hand covers your mouth, preventing you from screaming. A pair of yellow eyes stare at you through the darkness.
>
> "Don't move," says the intruder in a low, raspy voice. "If you resist, I will kill you. I want only to talk."

DMs should roll for a fear check at this point. If the DM is running this adventure in a traditional AD&D setting, it is advised that the PC be required to save vs. paralysis to imitate RAVENLOFT's fear check. Failing the roll means the PC is too frightened to move.

The PC is in a losing position; even if he screams, odds are he'll be dead before the other PCs can arrive to assist. If the PC insists on struggling, Udo strangles the PC to death. Udo receives a +4 to hit if the PC is in a prone position. Udo strikes first, even if the PC has hidden a weapon in the bed or can acquire one quickly. If Udo kills the PC and the others are not alerted, he enters the room of another PC to plead his case. Assuming the first PC approached does not resist, however, read the following:

> The creature relaxes his grip, allowing you to breathe. Moonlight streams across his face, illuminating his sickly, gray features. His face is a thin layer of stitched flesh stretched tightly over a malformed skull. His mouth contains two rows of brown, rotted teeth and a blackened tongue. Large, irregular stitches line his shirtless body, and a stomach-churning odor fills the air, almost choking you.
>
> "Not so pretty, eh?" he whispers. "People call me a monster. Yet, what of the monster's creator? Who is more cruel?"

The creature awaits a reply. He is here to tell the PC his side of the story, so he answers any questions truthfully. If the PC does not ask any questions (unlikely), he tells the PC the following: how Victoria created and abandoned him; the horror of his life as a freak; and that he loves Victoria, even though she has been so cruel to him. If the PC seems sympathetic, Udo asks for his help in convincing Victoria to marry him. If the PC is sarcastic or unwisely belligerent, Udo is 75% likely to attack; otherwise he flees.

If the PC listens to Udo's story, read the following:

> "I have come to enlist your aid. I want you to understand me so that you may explain my feelings to Victoria. I love her, and I want to marry her. I don't want her to create a companion for me; I could not bear to have the horror of this existence inflicted upon another. Victoria should take responsibility for what she made — for me. If she only knew the real me, she would see that beneath this veil of rotten flesh is a love as boundless as her cruelty."
>
> "Take this with you," says the creature, pressing a cold metal object into your hand. "It is an engagement ring. In my anger I neglected to give it to her. Carry my proposal to her, and explain my view. Don't let her fool you into believing I am evil. Remember who hired you to kill me."
>
> With incredible speed, the creature throws open the window, launches himself across the rooftops of Lausanne, and vanishes into the darkness.

If the PC tries to follow, pursuit proves difficult at best. Udo is able to leap the 10'–20' distances separating most of Lausanne's buildings with ease.

A Moral Dilemma

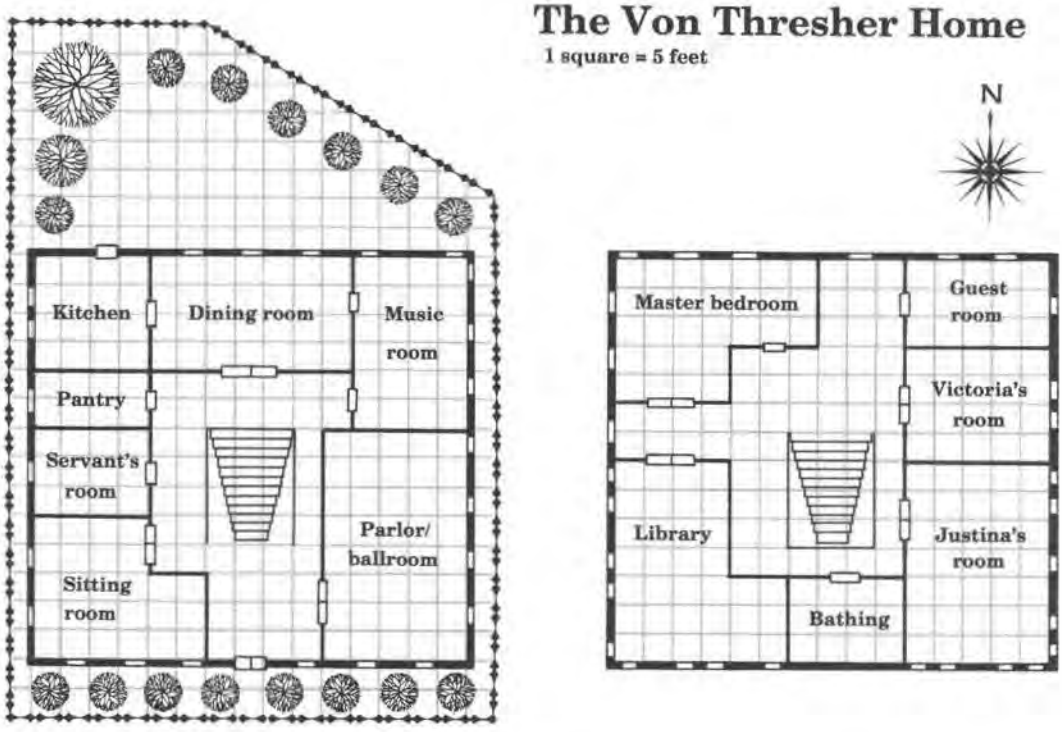
Before **Scene 6** (or **Scene 5**, if Udo killed the PC he visited), Udo's alignment is neutral. After that point, his obsession for Victoria or murder of a PC propels his alignment to neutral evil. Because he is not evil until this point, it should be interesting to see how the PCs react to him, especially if they previously used magic to discern his alignment. Somewhere between **Scenes 3** and **6**, the PCs will have to make a decision regarding their loyalties. Whom do they believe? Do they side with Victoria or Udo? Do they remain neutral?

The adventure assumes that most of the PCs are of good alignment and will help Victoria. The logic of the PCs should go something like this: although Victoria may have been wrong to create Udo, her intentions were not to cause harm or to create evil. Furthermore, while Udo's anger may be justified, his actions definitely aren't.

PCs who are particularly sympathetic with Udo may attempt to dissuade him from continuing to stalk Victoria. While this approach may be noble, it won't work. Udo is obsessed with marrying Victoria; he will not take no for an answer. Anyone keeping Victoria from him is an enemy and deserves to die.

Lastly, there is the possibility that the PCs decide to leave Victoria to her fate. If this occurs, the adventure ends with Victoria's death and Udo's subsequent suicide. "Good" characters who choose this route should be punished with a madness check or an involuntary alignment change.

The PCs' decision here may affect the rest of the adventure, so DMs should be very familiar with the scenarios that follow so they will be able to maintain a free-flowing story line in case the PCs' actions change the course of the adventure.



Also, the inhabitants of Lausanne do not look kindly upon individuals jumping on their rooftops in the middle of the night; they quickly alert the authorities and neighbors to the presence of these "burglars" by ringing loud bells from within their homes. PCs captured by the authorities are fined accordingly.

If the "visited" PC takes the time to wake the others to help pursue Udo, the golem's trail becomes covered by the falling snow (–5 modifier) during the delay. Divinatory spells may aid the PCs in determining Udo's location, but magic is not a thing to be tampered with nonchalantly in Gothic Earth. PCs casting spells must roll a powers check (see *Masque of the Red Death*, page 55) to see if their actions have captured the attention of the Red Death. PCs successfully tracking Udo find him in his lair (**Scene 3**) if they have not previously encountered him there. Otherwise, he is hiding at Dr. McGinnis's freak show (**Scene 4**).

The engagement ring that Udo left with the PC is gold with a simple but elegant diamond setting. The ring is worth 800 francs.

Scene 6: Setting a Trap

The PCs are to meet Victoria at the Von Thresher's home around 8:00 P.M. on November 4 to set a trap for Udo. When they arrive, read the following:

> Arriving at the Von Thresher home, you quickly knock three times upon the door as Victoria advised. A minute or two passes before the door is unlocked. Victoria peers around the corner of the half-open door. Her right hand shakily holds a derringer.
>
> Several tense moments pass before she withdraws the gun and allows you to enter. "I apologize," she says as you enter the house, "but I had to be certain that you weren't him."
>
> When you are all inside, she closes the door and locks it. "You have free rein of the house to execute your trap," she says.
>
> "Just, please, try not to break anything. I have given the servant the night off, and my uncle and his family are at the opera. They are not due to return until one o'clock or so. I just hope that he proves punctual so they will not have to see Udo."

> Victoria places the derringer in her waist-sash. She feels along the wall unsteadily, until she locates a glass of brandy on a nearby table. It's obvious she's had several drinks already.

The Von Thresher Home

The townhouse serves as a setting for a brief encounter. A map of the home is provided to assist PCs in planning an attack on Udo. Room descriptions are not provided, so DMs need to fill in this information as required. Before the encounter with Udo, the PCs should be given a copy of the map and the following description:

> The Von Threshers live in a large, two-story townhouse. Its ceilings are twenty feet high, and the floors are made of marble and polished wood. The townhouse has no cellar and its attic consists of a small crawlspace. The lower-story windows are five feet off the ground, and the upper-story windows are thirty feet from the ground. A small backyard is enclosed with a wrought-iron fence. The yard is bordered on three sides by neighboring yards.

Victoria expects the PCs to kill Udo. She inform them that Udo's usual method of entry is through her bedroom window, usually around midnight.

Throughout the night, Victoria downs several more drinks in an effort to shield Udo's voice from her mind. Unless the PCs watch her carefully, she is drunk by the time Udo arrives (attacks at –4 while inebriated). Occasionally, she clutches at the derringer for assurance and does not allow the PCs to take it from her. She intends to kill the creature if the PCs cannot.

If the PCs tell Victoria about the visit from Udo, she breaks down in tears. Read or paraphrase the following:

> "I don't deny it. I am guilty of all he says. I've been haunted by his memory far too long. Even now he speaks to me, his raspy voice burrowing inside my head, never letting up. I can never hide from him. He knows that, and I know it now. He intends to kill me."

This night Udo arrives earlier than usual (11:30 P.M.), via a lower story window in the servant's quarters. He spies on the PCs for some time from across the street before he makes his entrance. Udo uses his rogue proficiencies to sneak around the house in an attempt to ascertain the PCs' plans. If encountered, he attacks. If only 1–2 PCs are present and he has the upper hand, Udo fights for several rounds, fleeing only when he loses half his hit points.

His primary goal is to kidnap Victoria, not to kill the PCs. To do this, he attacks when he feels he has the element of surprise, knocking off one PC at a time if necessary, to get to her. If he fights his way through the PCs, Udo attempts to grab Victoria and jump out the nearest window.

When Udo comes into sight, Victoria, for her part, tries to shoot him with bullets she manufactured from the scalpels she used to create him. Victoria suffers a –6 penalty to hit, since she is both inebriated and nonproficient with the derringer.

If a PC is reduced to 0 hp or lower during this encounter, he is knocked unconscious. Victoria can use her physician skills to aid any wounded PCs. (She suffers a –2 penalty on her proficiency check until she sobers.) If Udo loses more than half his hit points, he retreats. Before he does, however, he pauses for one last exchange. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Udo cries out in pain and glowers at Victoria.
>
> "So this is how you treat me? I offer you never-ending love, and you try to kill me? Be warned, my lady, I shall be with you on your wedding night. You shall never love another."
>
> Udo turns and launches himself through the nearest window, shattering the glass.

PCs within 5′ of the retreating Udo may attack him as he turns his back. Victoria shoots at Udo as he flees. Udo suffers no damage from the breaking glass or the fall due to his exceptional agility. If Udo is still alive, he runs off into the night, returning to haunt Victoria in the following scenes. By then, he may have fully healed.

If Udo kidnaps Victoria, he heads for the Swiss Alps with his prize. His hope is to find a cave in which to live with his bride. The PCs must track him there to recover her.

If Udo escapes without Victoria, she hires the PCs to act as bodyguards at her wedding for an additional item of jewelry worth 400 francs (negotiable to 600 francs). In addition, she pays the full medical expenses of wounded PCs, though she attempts to heal them personally. If the house has been damaged, Victoria tells her family that the damage was caused by burglars.

If the PCs killed Udo in this encounter, the adventure ends here. It is suggested, however, that the DM allow Udo to survive until the wedding, as it will serve for a more interesting and satisfying conclusion.

Scene 8: The Wedding Approaches

In the event that Udo survived the previous encounter, Victoria hires the PCs to serve as bodyguards until after her wedding, which is to occur at Gustav's country chateau.

Victoria tells Gustav that she is being stalked by a deranged freak, so the PCs are invited to take up residence in the von Rudiger estate to continue protecting her. Victoria is in no danger until her wedding night, but the PCs do not know this. A female PC is able to stay with Victoria at the Von Threshers' household until 8:00 A.M. on November 17, when Victoria and her family arrive at the Von Rudiger estate for final preparations. Victoria introduces the PC to her family as an old friend from Ingolstadt. Her aunt, uncle, and cousin Justina welcome the PC as one of their own.

The DM may drive the PCs into a paranoid frenzy with bumps in the night, tappings on the windows, or perhaps even have a PC awaken to see Udo's cold, yellow eyes staring at him through a bedroom window, only to disappear when the PC blinks.

The PCs will probably spend the intervening days before the wedding healing and planning a trap for Udo. As with the Von Thresher home, Gustav and his father, Hermann, give the PCs access to every room and the honeymoon cottage to prepare their plans.

Maps and descriptions of these locations should likewise be given to the PCs.

Victoria believes Udo won't attack at the wedding due to the numerous guests and guardsmen that will be present. She believes (correctly) that he'll make his move when they leave for their honeymoon cottage. She encourages the PCs to plan an ambush for Udo there.

The wedding is described in detail as the PCs should experience the full extent of the gala event while waiting for Udo's attack. DMs should play out the whole affair as a normal wedding, not as an intermission between encounters with Udo.

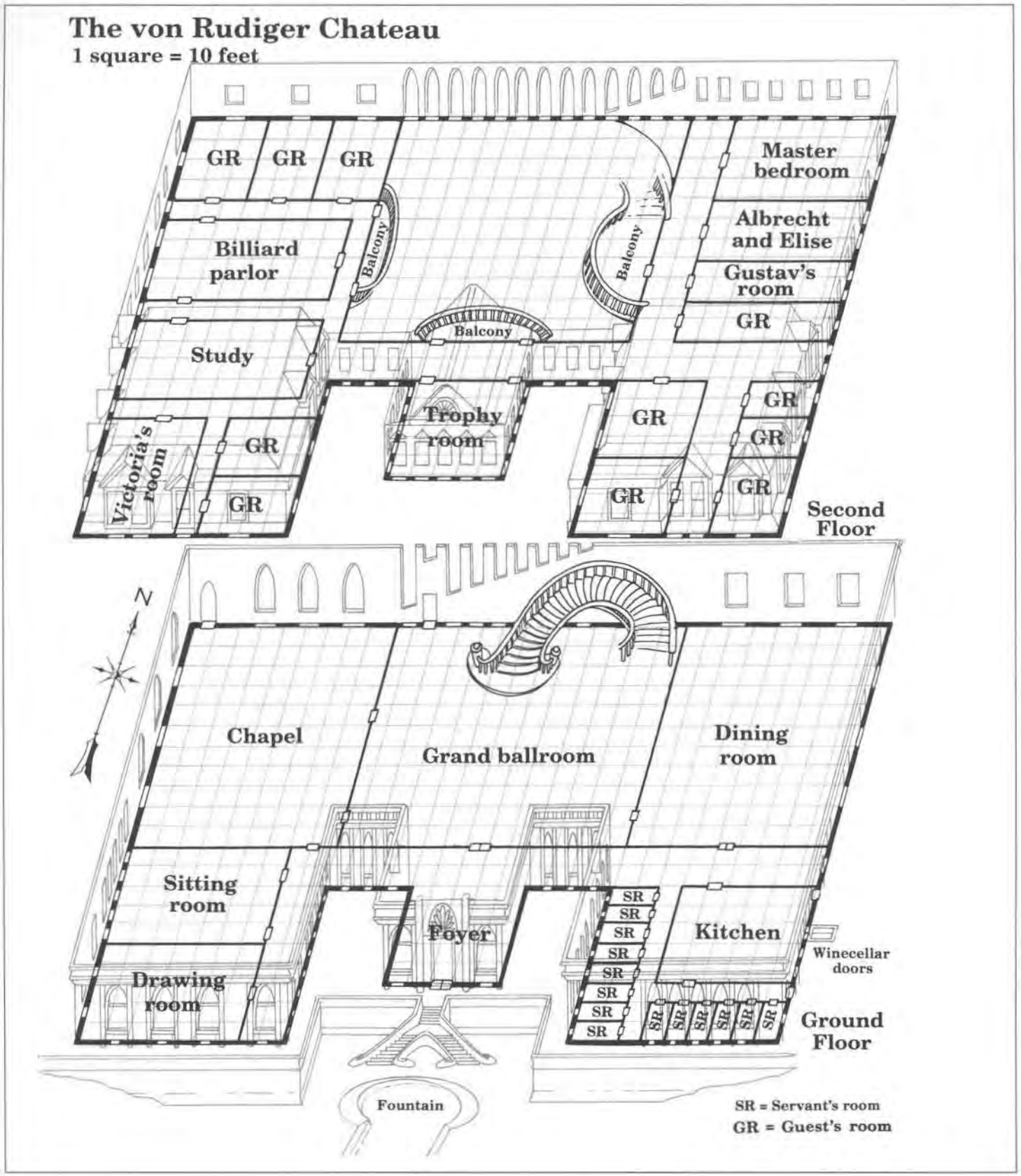
The hint of danger should always be present for the PCs, but the guests are oblivious to the threat. They are enjoying the grand event and attempting to mingle with the PCs as any guest might.

The Von Rudiger Estate

Gustav and his family live on a palatial estate just outside Lausanne. His father, a member of the Swiss Parliament, is a very wealthy man of noble lineage. Their chateau is surrounded by woods and is located at the foot of the Swiss Alps. The important rooms of the chateau are described below.

The Von Rudiger Chateau

> The Von Rudiger Chateau is an impressive, castlelike structure. Every room is spacious and sumptuously decorated with marble, gold, and silk. Immense French windows with red velvet drapes adorn most of the common rooms. The ceilings on


The von Rudiger Chateau
1 square = 10 feet
GR
GR
GR
Master bedroom
Albrecht and Elise
Gustav's room
GR
Billiard parlor
Balcony
Balcony
Balcony
Study
Trophy room
GR
GR
GR
GR
GR
GR
Victoria's room
Second Floor
N
Chapel
Grand ballroom
Dining room
Sitting room
Foyer
SR
SR
SR
SR
SR
SR
SR
SR
Kitchen
Winecellar doors
Drawing room
Ground Floor
Fountain
SR = Servant's room
GR = Guest's room

the first floor are thirty feet high, twenty feet high on the second. More than a dozen well-groomed felines, Hermann von Rudiger's pets, saunter freely about the premises. A few of the cats are friendly and circle around your legs as you walk. Others remain at a distance, ignoring you.

As with the Von Thresher home, a map is included of the chateau. Descriptions of the rooms important to the story appear in the appropriate sections.

Udo uses the attic as his residence and base of operations for his terror tactics. If the PCs check the attic, they are 50% likely to encounter Udo there. If he is there, he attacks the closest PC. If no more than 1–2 PCs are present, he fights until the PCs are dead or he is severely wounded, then he flees the attic (through a window, if necessary). If more PCs are present, he fights for no more than three rounds before fleeing.

Scene 9: The Wedding Day

The wedding day is a hectic affair with over 500 guests. Gustav has hired extra guards to prevent intruders from disturbing the wedding.

Servants hustle throughout the chateau, bumping into one another on their way to making preparations. Last minute deliveries arrive every half-hour. The house is in utter chaos.

To make matters worse, an hour after breakfast, Miss Victoria tells you that she discovered a bouquet of lilies inside her bedroom. All the doors and windows to the chateau were locked last night. Victoria asks you not to say anything to Gustav but warns you to remain alert.

The DM may add additional touches to convey the chaos at the chateau. The presence of the guests' children scurrying about may prove an adequate distraction to the PCs.

The Ceremony

The ceremony takes place as planned. Udo has no intention of attacking the couple in the midst of a large crowd. He is disguised as a guest. To hide his height (6'4"), he remains seated or slouches and moves with the crowds. DMs may want to give the PCs a 30% chance of seeing through any of his disguises. If he is recognized, he flees through the nearest door or window.

Just before noon, the servants begin ushering the guests toward the chapel. Everyone is dressed to the nines for this glorious occasion. Unhurriedly they take their seats, talking about the beautiful arrangements and the great expense to which the widower Herr Hermann von Rudiger went to for his son's wedding.

The guests continue chattering until their noise is halted by a chord from an organ as the wedding march begins. Gustav and his father arrive at the altar together. Next comes the slow waltz of the bride in her flowing gown. A white lace veil covers her face, and pearls encircle her throat. Her uncle Albrecht leads her by the arm down the aisle. The guests gasp at the bride's beauty.

Warily, you watch the entrances to the chapel as the ceremony proceeds. The couple's vows are elaborate, and the ceremony takes longer than expected. Finally you hear the pronouncement of "man and wife," and Gustav removes Victoria's veil to kiss her. A great cheer goes up, drowning out the music. Gustav and Victoria smile as they head back toward the entrance to be escorted by your party to the ballroom for the reception.

The Reception

After the ceremony, the reception begins in the grand ballroom, where the guests engage in polite conversation. The reception is a lavish affair with several well-known musicians, tables heaped with various meats and cheeses, and gallons upon gallons of wine. Hermann von Rudiger toasts his son and new "daughter." He asks that his guests enjoy the food, but to leave room for the dinner that is to be served at 5:00 P.M.

If the PCs choose to mingle, a few of the more notable personalities present are listed in the Guest List sidebar.

Scene 10: The Dinner

At 5:00 P.M. all of the guests are seated at long tables in the dining room. Victoria and Gustav sit at the head of the centermost table. The PCs are assigned to various seats throughout the room, each affording them a constant view of the couple.

Dinner consists of roasted stuffed quail served on covered, silver plates. The newlyweds are served first. Gustav is engaged in conversation with two fellows to his right, and he ignores the meal placed before him. Victoria, however, raises the cover of her plate. As she does so, her eyes fill with fright and she closes it again quickly. Regaining her composure, she motions for a servant to remove the plate. Gustav does not notice her reaction.Victoria taps Gustav on the shoulder and excuses herself. She then rises and follows the retreating servant into the kitchen.

Those who follow Victoria into the kitchen learn what has upset her:

Inside the kitchen, Victoria shouts at one of the servants. As you enter, she thrusts her covered plate toward you. Opening the lid, you discover the severed head of one of Hermann's cats. The servants scream at the sight of it. Fortunately, the screams cannot be heard above the din in the dining room. A few of the servants drop to their knees to beg forgiveness for serving such a horror to their new mistress.

Victoria throws her hand to her mouth and rushes from the kitchen to the servants' privies.

Scene 11: The Ball

The ball begins at 8:00 P.M. The tables, previously heaped with foods and wines, have been removed to allow room for dancing. A chamber orchestra plays some waltzes, and at one point, Divina Sabbastano, a renowned soprano, sings a few arias.

Champagne bottles are uncorked by the score, and laughter and gaiety fill the room. Victoria and Gustav dance among their many guests. Every now and then, you can see Victoria try to guide Gustav toward the center of the room, where she undoubtedly feels safer, away from the room's entrances and exits.

The PCs may decide to stay in the ballroom, patrol the grounds, or go to the honeymoon cottage to await Victoria's arrival. Alternatively, they may split up in order to do all of these things. This encounter assumes at least one PC stays at the ball to guard Victoria.

Udo observes the ball from the staircase balcony, disguised as one of the servants. Every time Gustav's hand touches Victoria's, his heart swells with anger.

At about 10:30 P.M., Victoria's cousin, Justina, complains of a headache and retires to her room, brushing past Udo as she does so. Unless the PCs are watching her specifically, they do not see her leave. If she is alone, Udo follows her into the room and vents his anger by killing her.

If any of the PCs are with her, Udo pretends to be a bustling servant and heads away from the staircase. He does not follow Justina, nor does he kill her. He is too intent upon remaining unnoticed so that he may attack the honey-

Guest List

The following guests are in attendance at Victoria's wedding.

Hermann von Rudiger: Gustav's widowed father, a former army officer, has inherited his wealth from his father's railroad investments. Indeed, the railroads continue to produce much of his opulence. He is also a member of the Swiss Parliament and enjoys talking about politics and his son, of whom he is very proud.

Albrecht von Thresher: Victoria's uncle. Albrecht took her into his home when Victoria's father died. He is a jovial, heavyset man of kind disposition. He is slightly hard of hearing, which leads to some humorous verbal exchanges. Lord Albrecht von Thresher is an attorney of great repute in Lausanne.

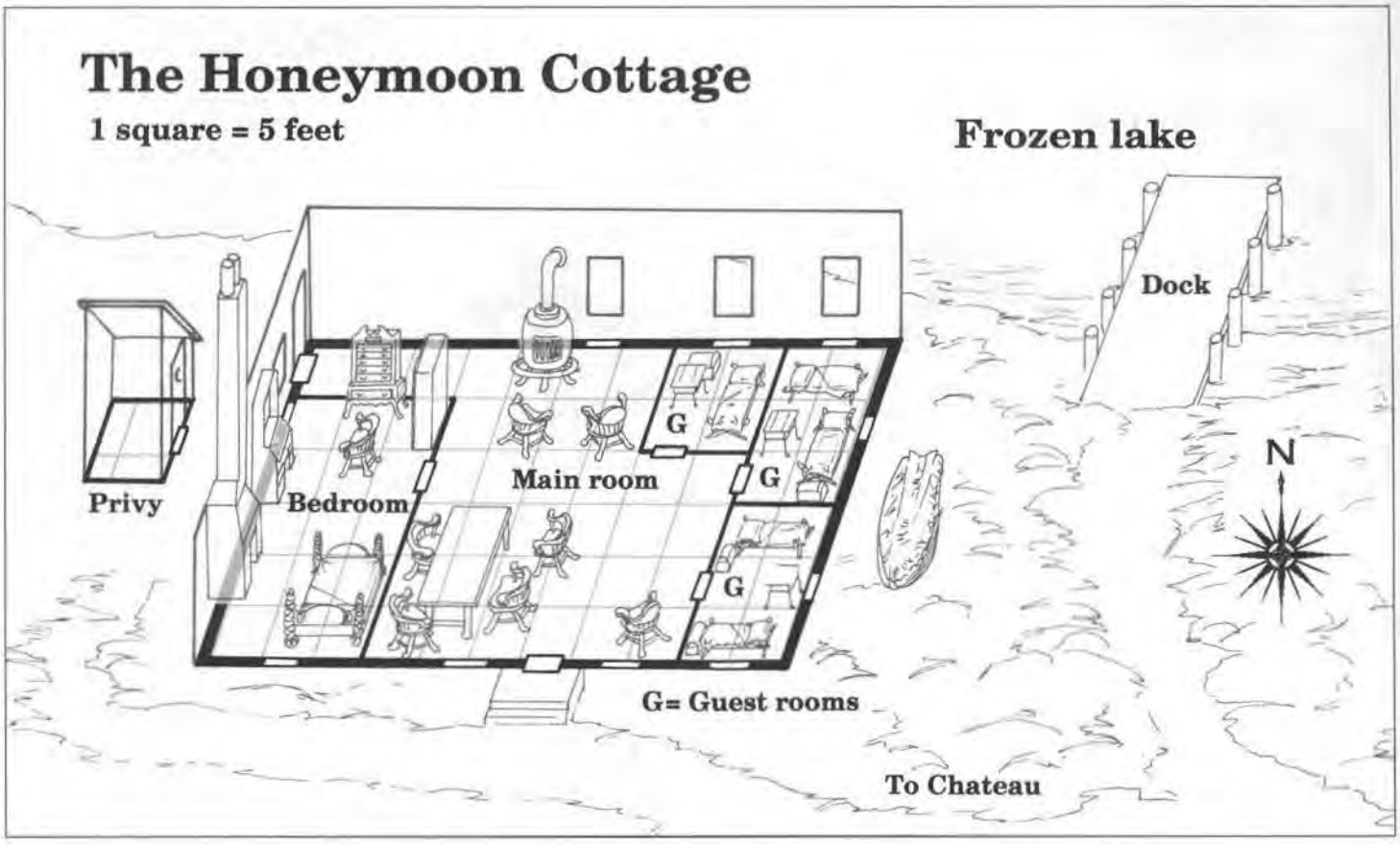
Elise von Thresher: Victoria's aunt and Albrecht von Thresher's wife of 31 years. Elise is thin, proper, and utterly conservative. She is thrilled to see Victoria marrying a proper gentleman, especially one from such a wealthy and prestigious family.

Justina von Thresher: Justina is the youngest daughter (21 years old) and the only unmarried child of the Von Threshers. Justina is happy for her cousin but suspects that all is not right. She has observed Victoria acting very strangely: keeping late hours, talking to herself, sneaking out at night, etc. She has not, however, been able to pry any information out of her cousin. She may reveal her fears to the PCs if they can gain her confidence. Like Victoria in her younger days, Justina is ambitious and wants to be a lawyer or judge. Her mother frowns on her aspirations. Justina is also fond of music and is a very accomplished pianist.

Divina Sabbastano: A famous soprano renowned throughout the world and an acquaintance of the Von Rudiger family, Divina is very wealthy and aloof. She believes she is loftier than any of the nobility present and expects to be treated as such. She is accompanied by an entourage of servants who throw rose petals wherever she treads. Divina will not even acknowledge a PC who is not of the noble class.

Sigmund Freud: Dr. Freud is Gustav's distant cousin. He is not happy to be attending the affair, but his wife, Martha, insisted it was the socially correct thing to do. Although a medical doctor, Sigmund views the PCs as an opportunity to do more research on a side interest: dreams. He attempts to change the topic of any talk begun in his presence to that of dreams. Given the chance, he prods the PCs for dream experiences.

Martha Bernays Freud: Sigmund's wife is uninterested in his questions in regards to dreams, which she's heard over a thousand times. She mingles with Elise von Thresher and anyone else wishing to chat.



mooners on the way to their cottage.

If Udo kills Justina, Victoria, having learned that her cousin took ill from the champagne served and retired to her room, goes looking for her to say her evening farewell at about 10:50 P.M. If a PC follows her, read the following:

> "Justina! Justina!" Victoria calls, knocking on the door. The ballroom noise drowns out her voice.
>
> "Perhaps she is asleep," Victoria says to you. "The poor darling could never handle her drink. I'll just go in and awaken her. It will take only a minute." She eases past you into the room. Suddenly, you hear her scream, and she stumbles out the door toward you, falling at your feet.
>
> "No! No!" she mutters. "Not Justina! No!" She begins to sob.
>
> Inside the room, a breeze from an open window chills the room like an omen of death. Your eyes turn to the lifeless form of Justina stretched across the canopied bed. Moving closer, you can see her vacant eyes staring back and almost through you. Her satin dress is in tatters, and her head hangs limply to one side.
>
> Victoria shambles into the doorway, wiping the tears from her eyes.
>
> "We've got to leave," she mumbles, still staring at her dead cousin. "Gustav and I must... before anyone else is hurt. Already my creation has caused too much ill. And my poor uncle, how will I explain this to him? His heart will be irreparably broken."
>
> Victoria straightens herself. "Come," she says, "we must tell your companions what has occurred, but we mustn't alert the guests or my uncle. We'll prepare the carriage as planned and leave immediately."

Victoria finds her derringer before saying farewell to her guests, keeping the weapon hidden in her sash again. If Justina is dead, Victoria's heart is hardened by the pain, and she plans to seek revenge against Udo. If Justina still lives, the honeymoon couple still departs at 11:00 P.M. as scheduled.

Scene 12: The Honeymoon

Victoria and Gustav are to honeymoon at a lakeside cottage, one mile north of the Von Rudiger chateau. The PCs should have been given ample time to form a plan regarding the couple's protection on the country road. A thick forest of snow-covered pines surrounds the right side of the route, and a frozen lake clings to the left side of the road.

The Cottage

Hermann von Rudiger uses the five-room cabin as a hunting lodge in the winter and a boathouse in the summer. Its front and back doors bolt from the inside.

In the main room are a wood-burning stove, a bearskin rug, a table, and several wooden, fur-covered chairs. The bedroom contains a large four-poster bed, a writing desk, a wardrobe, and a fireplace. The guest rooms all are furnished with a small bed, a nightstand, and a footlocker.

Outside the cottage is an outhouse, a short pier, and a large rowboat.

The lake is covered with a thin sheet of ice roughly 2" thick.

The Attack

Unless the PCs have made other arrangements, Gustav's servant, Otto, brings the honeymoon coach to the chateau around 11:00 P.M. to take the newlyweds to the cottage. Fifteen minutes into their journey, Udo jumps from a tree onto the moving coach. He attacks the driver, attempting to throw him off the side. Roll for surprise, then allow a Dexterity check for the driver to remain seated — a surprised driver suffers a –3 penalty.

Any PCs inside the coach during the attack hear a loud "thud" and feel a sudden jar when Udo leaps onto the coach. If the driver is unseated, they also hear a scream as he falls off the coach and past the window.

If Udo unseats the driver, he grabs the reins and drives the horses to the edge of the pier and toward the frozen lake. The horses are panicked by his inhuman presence, and they run full-speed toward the ice.

If the driver remains seated, he must drop the reins to fight Udo or suffer attacks from behind. Regardless of whether the driver drops the reins, the horses are spooked by Udo's presence, and they head fullspeed for the pier as the road dead-ends at the cottage. Unless halted (a successful Bend Bars/Lift Gates roll required to halt), the horses run the coach onto the lake in five rounds.

Anyone thrown from the coach before it hits the lake suffers 3d6 hp damage upon impact unless (30% chance) a snowbank breaks their fall, lessening the damage to 1d6.

Any PC climbing onto the roof while the coach is moving must make a successful Strength check to maintain a hold. The PC must also make a successful save vs. paralyzation or be hit by tree limbs for 2d6 hp damage. If struck by the branches, the PC must make an additional Strength check at –1 to avoid being thrown off the coach. Two rounds of climbing are required to reach the driver's seat and gain the reins, leaving three or fewer rounds to stop the careening coach. Any PC attempting to stop the horses is subject to two rounds of attacks from Udo.

PCs may elect to jump out of the coach before it goes off the pier. A successful save vs. paralyzation is required to jump from the coach. An unsuccessful save indicates the PC suffers 2d6 hp falling damage; a successful save indicates half damage, rounded down. If time allows, Victoria and Gustav attempt to jump from the speeding coach. PCs abandoning the coach may attempt to drag the couple out with them. A successful attack roll is needed to push or grab them.

Anyone successfully stopping the coach becomes the subject of Udo's attacks. If the PC is slain and no one else comes to fight Udo, he tries to start the horses toward the lake again. Because they are spooked, the DM should roll 1d4 for their reaction. On a roll of 1, the horses break free of the coach and run for the woods. On a roll of 2, they stubbornly refuse to move. On a roll of 3–4, they head breakneck for the ice. If they break free or refuse to move, Udo jumps down from the driver's seat and rips the doors from the coach. He then attacks anyone within, preferring to kill Gustav first, the PCs second, and saving Victoria for last. If he kills Gustav and few PCs stand in his way, he grabs Victoria and attempts to flee.

If the horses are headed for the lake again, or were never stopped, the coach careens off the pier and through the thin ice. Within five rounds the icy waters claim the carriage, though the horses struggle to keep their footing on the nearby ice as it sinks. They pull frantically, trying to break free from it, but the weight of the coach inexorably pulls them under; they sink within two rounds of the coach's submergence, drowning within another two rounds. If Victoria and Gustav are inside the coach, the crash breaks Victoria's arm and knocks Gustav unconscious. If the pair is not rescued within seven rounds, they drown as Victoria cannot open the coach's doors from inside (they open out).

Any PCs caught in the coach will have to await rescue unless they can break the coach's windows and swim out (Bend Bars/Lift Gates to break the glass). Victoria does not have the strength for such a maneuver. Also, any PC hanging onto the coach as it enters the lake is thrown off. The PC has a 50/50 chance of falling into the water. Udo lands on the ice. Heavily encumbered PCs falling into the water sink within two rounds. Less encumbered PCs may tread water or swim (if they are proficient at this skill). DMs should see the *PHB* for rules on swimming and holding one's breath.

If a PC falls near him, on the ice or in the water, Udo flings himself at him. If the attack takes place on the ice, he tries to push the PC into the water. If the attack takes place in the water, Udo attempts to drown the PC. Udo does not need oxygen to survive, so he cannot drown, though he may pretend to do so if seriously wounded.

If the PCs disregard him and attempt to rescue the honeymooners or anyone inside the coach, Udo attacks them. If Victoria is to be the wife of another, he prefers to see her drown. Udo fights with ferocity and does not flee the scene of this battle unless reduced to 10 hit points or less, whereupon he sinks to the bottom of the lake to bide his time.

Rescuing Victoria and Gustav

As the coach sinks rapidly, there is little time for the rescuers to perform elaborate rescue maneuvers. PCs may use rope if it is readily accessible upon their persons. Each rescue attempt requires a successful Bend Bars roll and two rounds to complete. Any rescuer standing upon the surrounding ice has a 10% chance per round of falling through. For every PC standing within the same 10' area, the chance increases 10% per PC. If the PCs are close to the pier or solid ground, they may attempt a Dexterity check to jump to safety. Lying flat on the ice, thereby redistributing the weight, reduces the chance of breaking the ice by half. PCs who fall through the ice risk drowning. The safest means of retrieving victims is for at least two PCs to form a human chain across the ice. In the event that the ice breaks, the next PC in line can pull the sinking PC out of the water.

Meanwhile, the rest of the PCs must battle Udo. If they engage him quickly, he is unable to prevent any rescue attempts. Fighting on the ice results in a –2 attack penalty for all parties due to the slippery conditions. Also, there is a base 10% chance that the ice breaks, forcing each combatants to make a successful Dexterity check to avoid falling in the water.

Rescuing drowning victims by jumping in after them is tricky business due to the extremely cold temperature of the water. A rescuer must have the swimming proficiency and make a successful Strength check at –2 to rescue the victim in question. If unsuccessful, the rescuer must make an additional Strength check or begin to drown. In fairness to the PC, the DM should warn any player attempting to rescue another about the risks involved.

The DM should convey a sense of urgency and suspense in the final combat. The encounter should be run very quickly, requiring players to think spontaneously. Be certain that the PCs' intentions are fully understood before rolling the dice for the outcome of this extremely dangerous combat encounter. The action should be fast, tense. Don't let the dice slow things down. If this begins to happen, you may want to make up your own results as you go. Also, if too many people begin to drown and the adventure becomes bleak instead of fun, the DM may have Udo, in a change of heart, rescue them.

Concluding the Adventure

If Victoria survives, she gladly pays the PCs the 2,500 francs in jewelry and currency she promised, and she is eternally grateful, as is Gustav if he survived. If he drowned, his father is devastated but doesn't blame the PCs. Victoria remains a widow and joins a religious order to repent for her creation. She may even practice medicine again — or experiment.

If Gustav survived, he remembers little of the encounter other than the terrible accident; he was knocked unconscious for the duration of combat. He accepts almost any explanation given about the incident (within reason). He and his family shower the PCs with accolades.

If the PCs tell him the truth about Victoria's part in this madness, or if he finds out later, he divorces her so that her past does not shame his family. In this case, he provides her with an equitable financial settlement by which she may live out the rest of her life comfortably. He still loves her, after all.

If for any reason Victoria did not survive this encounter, Gustav grieves for a few months but eventually marries Justina, Victoria's cousin, if she still lives. Because Justina is not content to be a complacent, sit-at-home wife, however, their marriage is politically appealing but rocky and loveless.

Through Gustav's and Victoria's connections, the PCs are bound to be offered further work. And perhaps they have not seen the last of Udo. If he happened to "drown," perhaps his body was never recovered. Perhaps the icy water put Udo in a state of suspended animation, only to return next spring. Or perhaps Victoria's ambition returns, prompting her to reassemble Udo, or even worse, continue her experiments.

If Victoria and Gustav survive the ice, the DM should award the PCs 1,500 XP each. This amount should be halved if they made the attempt but were unsuccessful. No experience should be awarded if they did nothing to save the couple. If Udo was killed, another 4,000 XP should be divided among the group.

Also, If Udo is killed, Doctor McGinnis learns of the PCs' involvement in his friend's death, and he decides to seek revenge. First, he tries to locate Udo's body. If Udo's body sank into the lake and was left there by the PCs, he recovers it. Within six months, he successfully reanimates the golem. Even if the body is unrecoverable, Doctor McGinnis, a very intelligent and patient man, begins to plot his revenge on the PCs. He delves further into the magical arts, becoming a tool of the Red Death. His attacks on the PCs are subtle and may come in the form of attempts at character defamation, loss of fortune, loss of a spouse or children to a strange disease, etc. He tracks the PCs wherever they go.

Of course, if Udo survived the encounter by feigning death and sinking to the bottom of the lake, he seeks his own revenge. He waits for the PCs to leave Lausanne before returning for Victoria. Without the PCs' aid, Gustav is murdered, and Victoria is captured. Udo hides her away in the mountains. DMs may have the PCs learn of her disappearance and Gustav's murder. They may try to track him into the Swiss Alps to recover Victoria. If they do not go after her, she escapes from Udo and leaps to her death. Udo then blames the PCs for her death and seeks them out.

One final adventure centers around the *Frankenstein Papers*. Assuming the PCs recovered them, a qabal, such as the Brotherhood of Alchemae or the Fellowship of the Crimson Dawn (see *The Gothic Earth Gazetteer* for further information) might learn that the PCs have them and come looking. In their determination to learn the secrets behind resurrecting the dead, they do not stop at anything, killing for the papers if they must. Also, any PC who has read the papers may become obsessed by the idea of building a golem himself. This could lead to some interesting consequences. Ω

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FORGOTTEN REALMS®

STORM SEASON

BY PAUL F. CULOTTA

Foul weather foes

Artwork by Tony DiTerlizzi
Cartography by Michael Scott

Last year while Paul was writing the Heroes' Lorebook *FORGOTTEN REALMS® accessory, he had a brainstorm that turned into this tale of evil things that come out when it rains. He recommends that DMs watch the weather forecast so they can run this adventure when the wind is howling, rain is pouring down, and lightning is striking.*

"Storm Season" is an adventure in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting for up to 6 PCs of levels 7–12 (about 50 levels total). The PCs should include a wide mix of classes and might include lower-level henchmen.

The setting is the city of Arabel in the Kingdom of Cormyr. While there is enough information in the text to run the adventure, the DM may wish to consult additional sources to add atmosphere. Many are available: *The Night Parade, FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting, FORGOTTEN REALMS Adventures, Cormyr, Volo's Guide to Cormyr,* and the recently released *Heroes' Lorebook.*

DMs who run campaigns in other AD&D® game worlds (or their own) can easily adapt this adventure by placing it in a large city run by a powerful lord similar to Myrmeen Lhal, a key NPC in this adventure.

Before running this adventure, the DM should consult the sidebar on the Night Parade and create four creatures in addition to the six that are detailed in the scenario.

Adventure Background

Myrmeen Lhal was born and raised in the large metropolis of Calimport. It was there that she married a worthless scoundrel named Dak. After their daughter was stillborn, they went their separate ways, and Myrmeen left the city to become an adventurer. Following numerous quests as a Harper ranger, she was chosen by King Azoun IV to be the lord of Arabel.

About a year ago, Dak was apprehended in Myrmeen's city for committing murder. In a fruitless attempt to gain a pardon from his ex-wife, he revealed that their daughter had not died. Right after the painful birth, Dak had told Myrmeen that their daughter was dead, and she believed him. Actually, the babe had been sold (by him) for the use of the Night Parade in Calimport. Dak had forgotten his ex-wife's temper; instead of pardoning him

in exchange for this revelation, she beheaded him in a fit of rage.

The Night Parade are strange, otherworldly creatures who hide or masquerade (some can *shapechange*) within an urban area. They transform infants into creatures like themselves and commit other unspeakable atrocities. Their eventual goal is to take over lands that they reach by means of *gates*. Because their appearance and powers are so fantastic, most people dismiss rumors of the Night Parade as stories to frighten children. As Myrmeen Lhal discovered, however, the Night Parade is real.

Myrmeen and several adventurers journeyed to Calimport to find her daughter, who would have been 14 years old. Myrmeen did not find her, but she adopted another 14-year-old Calishite girl, a teenager named Krystin. Krystin bears a remarkable physical resemblance to Myrmeen.

During their visit, Myrmeen and her companions enabled the people of Calimport to recognize the Night Parade members by killing the monster that had played a hypnotic tune and entranced the citizens. When this creature died, the façade dropped, and the people rioted, killing or driving away almost all of the 6,000 Night Parade members who had infested the city.

Myrmeen and her companions also destroyed the evil artifact responsible for transforming the infants and opening the *gate* to the Night Parade's home world. All of Myrmeen's comrades died in the effort, except for Krystin and an 18-year-old fighter named Ord. Both accompanied Myrmeen back to Arabel.

The preceding events are revealed in greater detail in the novel *The Night Parade* by Scott Ciencin. The events in this adventure are the aftermath.

For the Dungeon Master

Following her ordeal, Myrmeen sent word to rulers throughout the Realms, warning them of the Night Parade. She suspected that those in Calimport were but one cell.

Myrmeen was right. When the survivors of the Calimport disaster contacted others of their kind, the matter was investigated, and the trail led the Night Parade to Myrmeen Lhal and Arabel. It was decided that a special elite squad would infiltrate Arabel. There they would power a new *gate* to their home world, bring in hundreds of their kind, entrance the populace, and lead an unopposed assault on the palace, killing Myrmeen, Krystin, and Ord. What better way was there for them to repay Myrmeen Lhal for her meddling in Calimport? With her out of the way, anarchy would result, and one of the Parade members could emerge as the new ruler. Thereafter, the Night Parade would use Arabel as a base of operations in Cormyr.

This squad arrived 10 days ago, and they slipped in easily since many people come through Arabel. (Those who could not *shapechange* were hidden among the luggage and goods of their caravan). They purchased a warehouse, made it their headquarters, and assembled their *gate* device.

The *gate* looks like a strange sculpture of interlocking metallic rods and balls. It can be activated only by massive jolts of electricity. *Lightning bolt, shocking grasp,* and similar electric-based spells do not work. What is required are 50 bolts of lightning from a thunderstorm over a period of 10 consecutive days (with no more than five bolts per day).

For seven nights in a row, the normally hot and dry summer evenings in Arabel have been interrupted by spectacular storms with lots of lightning, thunder, and rain. This storm has been summoned by Lord Tempos, the squad's leader. The other Night Parade members have constructed a panel that opens the roof of the warehouse. When the storm comes, another member of their squad, Evpoter, calls five lightning bolts down through the opening in the roof down upon the *gate*. Evpoter needs only 15 more bolts (three nights' worth) to activate the *gate* by the time the PCs reach Arabel.

Although thunderstorms are not unusual in Arabel, a sustained week of them could have looked suspicious to those who might divine that the storms are summoned. Hence, Parade members have been killing local wizards, druids, and sages. Because these murders were bound to attract the authorities' attention, the killers left Zhentarim symbols carved on their victims' bodies to mislead investigators.

Players' Introduction

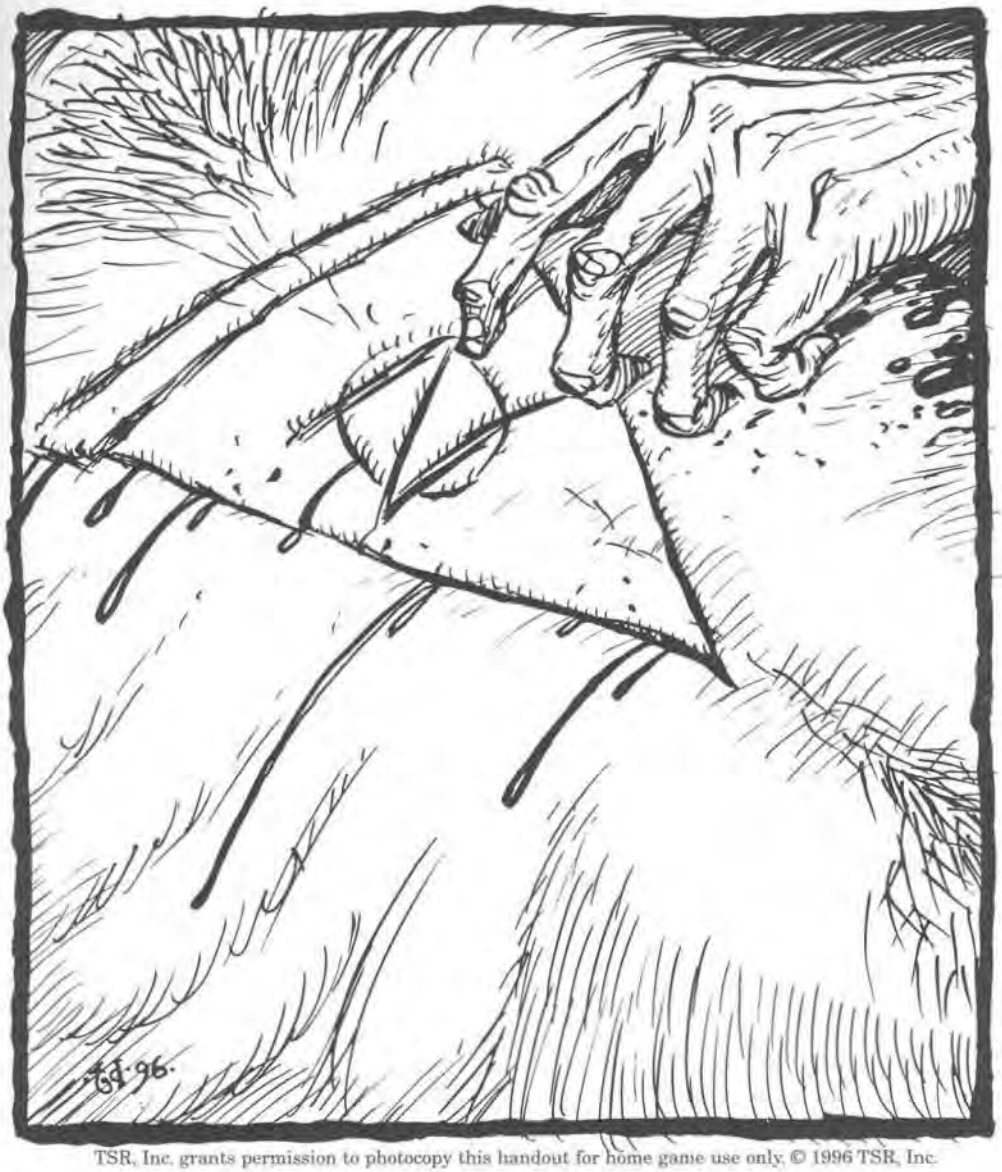
The adventure begins with the PCs traveling to Arabel for some reason of their own. Perhaps they are caravan guards, owners of a caravan (not unlikely, given the heroes' levels), invitees to a social function, or just on their way to somewhere else. They are about a day's march from Arabel. At dusk, just as one of the heroes (a druid PC is best) is washing his face in a creek, putting a pot of water on the campfire to boil, or doing something similar, the following happens:

> As the sun sets, thunder rumbles from the horizon. You see a storm building in the direction of distant Arabel. Suddenly, the water in your cookpot begins to swirl, and a blood-ied face appears. It is the image of a frantic older man. He yells out, "The shrine! Help me! By the power of Mielikki, if you can hear me..."
>
> His further pleas are drowned out by chittering laughter, and you see a blur of yellowish wings and black claws slashing his neck. The man disappears, but you hear his anguished screams. Somehow you get a clear mental picture of where this is, only a few miles down the road.

Unless the PCs have some means of immediately getting to this man within two rounds, they are too late to help. The shrine is two miles down the road. Jenko, the Night Parade creature who killed the older man, leaves 3 rounds after the PCs receive the message. A brave PC who gets there quickly (through *teleport* or *wish* spells, or some other means) arrives just in time to see a smallish figure flying away. If he can catch up to it (through a *potion of flying* or a spell), run the combat with Jenko, a Night Parade member detailed in the sidebar.

Whenever the adventurers arrive at the site, they find the destroyed remains of a forest shrine and the decapitated body of Artos Malabar, a local druid. Artos's corpse is by a clear pool. This pool is a permanent *reflecting pool* created by the druids of Artos's circle, and he used it to cry out for help; the PCs were closest to him and so received his plea. The once-quiet grove has been ripped to pieces, and lying nearby is a very still black bear, its pelt oozing with wounds.

The bear, named Blug, is unconscious (0 hp) and can be cured. Unless the PCs have a way of communicating with or befriending Blug, however, he flies into a rage once he has 10 hp back. If the PCs can calm him down and speak with



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him, Blug reveals that he was Artos's best friend and that they were attacked by a "bad yellow bird with black hooks." A successful *animal friendship* spell combined with gentle treatment results in a PC winning a fine companion, although Blug's presence will certainly raise eyebrows in Arabel and other settled areas.

Blug is a big fan of fish (especially salmon) and, like most black bears, he loves wild honey. As long as he is around human companions who treat him well, he can be kept under control fairly easily. The exception is when he is around dogs. Blug gets defensive around them and immediately charges a barking or snarling dog; he has a +2 to hit it because he hates dogs. This stems from Blug's early years as a cub when a pack of wild dogs nearly did him in before his mother rescued him (killing several of the dogs in the process). PCs with a successful animal lore proficiency check notice Blug uttering a low growl whenever a dog is in the area, indicating that the bear is prone to attack with the least provocation.

Blug, Black Bear: INT semi-; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 27; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1–3/1–3/1–6; SA hugs (either paw hit with 18 or better causes hug for 2d4 hp damage); SZ M (6′ tall); ML 10; XP 175; *MM*/17.

Artos's belongings include a scimitar scabbard, a holy symbol of Mielikki upon his chest, and a pouch containing mistletoe, holly leaves, and five *goodberries.* Scratched into his chest is a symbol (see handout #1, this page). PCs with a successful heraldry proficiency check (or those who have seen it before) recognize it as the symbol of the Zhentarim.

This symbol is a red herring, deliberately left by the Night Parade on all the murdered spellcasters. The Black Network did not commit this murder.

A thorough search of the area uncovers where Artos was sleeping. The PCs find a walking staff, a pot of ink, a goose-feather quill, and a half-written parchment. The DM should give a copy of handout #2, on the next page, to the players.

Artos was in the process of writing this message when Jenko attacked. He fought the horrid creature briefly with his scimitar, then ran over to the enchanted pool to summon help while Blug held Jenko at bay. Blug fell, then Jenko ripped Artos up just after he contacted the PC in the opening scene.

The PCs can search further and find Artos's scimitar (roll of 1 on 1d10 for each round of searching; automatically found after 2 turns). It has elvish runes on the blade and, when picked up, it glows with a faint light, just like the moon. It is a *scimitar* +2 and has the ability to allow a druid or ranger wielder to cast *entangle, web,* and *starshine* once a day. It also has a minor curse: it may belong only to a druid or ranger, and it remains with him for life. Whenever a druid or ranger picks it up for the first time, his previous primary weapon of choice disintegrates. It has no effect on weapons of characters of another class who claim it, but they may not use its inherent powers. Even if wielded by another character, the first time a druid or ranger picks it up, it belongs to him and magically returns even if purloined by another character.

A PC with an ancient languages proficiency — ancient elvish can determine this weapon's name (*Moonarc*). A PC who speaks elvish has a 15% chance of deciphering the name. Eventually, the PCs may learn that this weapon was forged long ago by elven druids in the High Forest for a druid or ranger protector. Although it was meant to be used only by an elven druid or ranger, that part of the enchantment did not take

effect. If wielded by an elf ranger or druid, however, the blade functions as a *scimitar +3*.

Discovery of this item should make the PCs ponder why the Zhentarim would leave such a fine enchanted weapon. A *detect good, know alignment,* or *identify* spell reveals that it is not aligned with the forces of good (it is neutral).

The PCs may wish to bury Artos's body in the grove or take it with them to Arabel. Jenko removed Artos's head so that it would be nearly impossible to revive him. *Raise dead* spells simply do not work because of the missing head, and there is only a 60% chance of *resurrection* working. If the PCs try to resurrect him anyway, they must roll resurrection survival, 70% or less, due to Artos's Constitution of 9. If all this succeeds, he remains too weak to remember much for seven days, and by then it is too late. (But if he is revived, his scimitar returns to his side, even if it was claimed by another druid or ranger.)

PCs might try to use the enchanted pool as a scrying device. They are unsuccessful in locating the killer because they had only the briefest of looks at it. Whenever they do try to use the pool, they contact another druid, one Marolar Nightshade, who receives the PCs' bad news with a fierce scowl. He tells them that he will send three druids to restore the shrine, and they will arrive in three days. In the meantime, he asks that they lay Artos's remains to rest in the shrine and report the murder to Myrmeen Lhal, Lord of Arabel.

Lord Lhal:
For the past several nights, I have watched storms brewing over Arabel. Never in my fifty winters have I witnessed such fury.
You must know that Mielikki has guided me in detecting an imbal–

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Meeting with Lord Myrmeen Lhal

If the PCs do not use the reflecting pool or have not otherwise heard of Myrmeen Lhal, have an NPC peasant or farmer provide the information, and try to move them along to Arabel. The same NPC can provide the name of the druid if the heroes did not get the information from Blug.

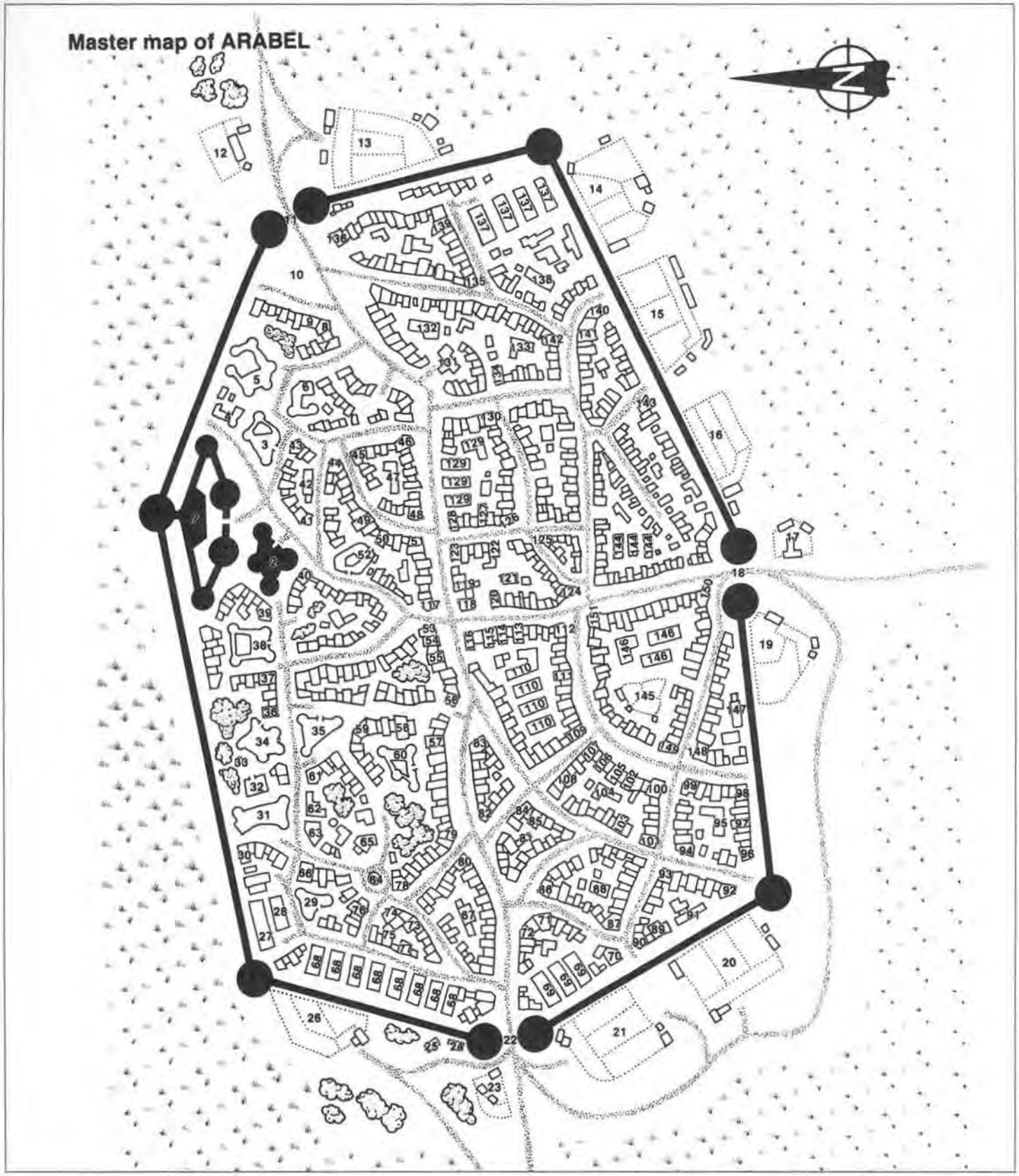
When they get to Arabel on the following day, the DM should refer to the map on page 32 to keep track of the PCs' whereabouts. To keep play moving, the DM may locate a mapmaker's shop close to the city gates. There the PCs can buy one for the mere sum of 20 gp (it is a high quality map and takes much time to prepare, after all).

Because caravan traffic and transport are the main industries of Arabel, normally the PCs should not get much of a challenge from the guards at the gates. Groups bringing a black bear into the city are stopped by the guards until they tell of the druid's death. At that point, the guards escort them to Myrmeen's palace for an audience (building **#2**), dropping the bear off at the citadel (building **#1**), where he is placed in a cell. If the PCs are toting Artos's body along, however, the guards react the same way. If they ask for an audience at the palace to tell Lord Lhal what happened or to deliver the unfinished note, the PCs are taken to the palace and, after a 20-minute wait, Myrmeen receives word of their presence and might recognize the name of a high-level character (DM's call as to whether the PC has gained a reputation within his campaign). She cancels her appointments for the day and sees them immediately.

> Seated upon a plush, but not overly ornate, throne is an absolutely gorgeous woman. She wears silvery chain mail armor that has rubies inset in the links. Her brunette hair is neatly tucked beneath a silver headdress shaped like the Phoenix. By her side is a curved long sword with a heavily jeweled hilt. Her deep blue eyes sparkle with flecks of yellow or gold as they consider you.

The DM should make initial conversation with Lord Lhal pleasant. Although she is a ravishing beauty to men and an object of envy to women, she is as tough as nails. Chosen by King Azoun because of her leadership abilities, Myrmeen saved Arabel from anarchy nine years ago. She is protective of her people, and she has instituted programs of housing, food for the poor, and welfare. She is the model benevolent dictator, and her rule is subordinate only to that of the King himself. She has heard of any PC who is 9th level or above and knows a few of their accomplishments. She gives lower-level PCs a chance to introduce themselves and tell a little of their exploits.

Myrmeen expresses dismay, anger, and shock at the murder of Artos


Master map of ARABEL
N

Guide to Arabel

1. Citadel (and jail)
2. Palace (court, assembly hall)
3. House Marliir (noble family)
4. The Weary Knight Inn (inn of good quality)
5. The Lady's House (temple of Tymora)
6. The Dragon's Rest (guesthouse and barracks, owned by the crown for the quartering of its guests)
7. The Whistling Wheel (inn)
8. The Traveler's Banner (inn)
9. The Lamps (hardware store)
10. The Bazaar (market area)
11. Eastgate
12. The Eastwatch Inn
13. The Iron Throne yards (merchant company yards)
14. Milzar's Yards (rental stockyard)
15. Thousandheads Trading Coster yards (merchant company yards)
16. Dragoneye Dealing Coster yards (merchant company yards)
17. Elfskull Inn
18. Calantar's Gate
19. Red Raven Mercenary Company HQ
20. The King's Trading Yards (crown-owned, but available for rental)
21. Trueshield Trading Priakos yards (merchant company yards)
22. The High Horn Gate
23. The Night Wolf Inn
24. Mother Lahamma's House (boarding house)
25. Raspral's Kiss (festhall)
26. Six Coffers Market Priakos yards (merchant company yards)
27. Gelzunduth Warehouse
28. Gelzunduth Warehouse
29. House of Gelzunduth (local merchant)
30. Rhalseer's (boarding house of good quality)
31. House of Kraliqh (local merchant)
32. House of Bhela (local merchant)
33. Well
34. House of Misrim (local merchant)
35. House of Hiloar (local merchant)
36. Shassra's (boarding house)
37. Falcon's Rest (inn of good quality)
38. House of Nyaril (local merchant)
39. The Watchful Shield (rental bodyguards)
40. Dulbiir's (rental costumes and finery, escort service)
41. Mulkaer Lomdath (fine tailor)
42. The Silver Tankard (tavern)
43. Mhaer Tzintin, Moneylender/money-changer
44. Eighlar's Fine Wines
45. Jhamma's Silks and Furs
46. Dhelthaen (butcher)
47. The Strongwatch (rental warehouse, heavily guarded)
48. The Pride of Arabel (inn of good quality)
49. Orbul's Fine Carving & Furniture
50. Khammath's Crystal (shop)
51. The Black Mast (tavern)
52. House of Thond (local merchant)
53. Hawk's Perch Trading House (pawnshop)
54. Szantel's Ropes, Cords, Chains, and Mesh
55. The Wary Warrior (weapons of all types)
56. The Two-Headed Lion (tavern)
57. The Striking Snake (tavern)
58. The Coiled Whip (tavern)
59. The Gentle Smile (festhall of good quality)
60. The House of Baerlear (local merchant)
61. The Black Barrel (tavern)
62. Hundar's Fine Carpets, Perfumes, and Lanterns
63. Iardon's Hirelings (rental servants, escorts, loaders and lifters, mourners, message or errand runners)
64. Monument to Dhalmass, the Warrior King
65. The Silver Stallion (tack shop)
66. Green Phial (medicines & physics shop and clinic)
67. Mhaes's (festhall)
68. House of Thond (rental warehouse)
69. Six Coffers Market Priakos warehouse (merchant company warehouse)
70. The Bent Bow (tavern)
71. Laeduth's (boarding house)
72. The Red Sword (tavern)
73. Vaethym Olorar (rental falconer)
74. Saerdar's Silks and Flowers
75. The Hungry Man (restaurant)
76. The Chalice (fine brass and metalworks)
77. Net of Pearls (gowns, jewelry, and lingerie)
78. Nelzara's (boarding house)
79. Buldo Cravan (butcher)
80. The Eyes and Ears of Arabel (messenger service, caravan guard hiring service, fast delivery service within Arabel)
81. Kelsar's Fowl (live poultry and game birds)
82. Ssarra's (restaurant)
83. The High Moon Inn
84. The Orange Banner Inn
85. The Lady's Tastes (fine clothing)
86. Soldiers Boots (tavern)
87. The Red Stirge (inn)
88. House Misrim Warehouse
89. The Velvet Couch (festhall)
90. The Burning Blade (tavern)
91. Nathscal's (rental) Warehouse
92. The Lavender Lion (festhall)
93. The Smoky Skull (tavern)
94. The Old Warrior (inn)
95. Zelond's (rental) Warehouse
96. Zelzar's (pawnshop and used goods)
97. Naneatha's (festhall)
98. The Dancing Dracolisk (tavern)
99. Thael Diirim's Parchment and Proclamations
100. The Roll Roast (inn)
101. Daglar Maermeet (armorer)
102. Orphast Ulbanath (scribe, cartographer, genealogist)
103. The Moonlit Touch (nightclub, festhall)
104. Quezzo's (rental) Warehouse
105. Dhaliima's (boarding house)
106. The Three Sisters (pawnshop, used and damaged clothes and goods)
107. Nuirouve Dornar, Potter
108. Fillaro's Overland Food (barrels of fish, etc., from the Sword Coast and Inner Sea)
109. The Blue Mace (inn)
110. House of Baerlear Warehouse
111. House of Lheskar Bhaliir (owner of the Dancing Dragon and the Dancing Dracolisk taverns, fence of stolen goods)
112. The Dancing Dragon
113. The Open Casket (pawnshop, used goods, caravan liquidation, and fence of stolen goods)
114. Ghastar Ulvarinn, Stonecutter
115. Baalimr Selmarr, Carpenter
116. Dazniir Relharphin, Wheelwright
117. Cheth Zalbar, Purveyor (fine perfumes, soaps, lotions, dyes, and cosmetics)
118. Bracerim Thabbold, Bedbuilder
119. The Lamp, Lantern, and Candle Shop of Nphreg Jhanos
120. Tamthiir's Leather Shop (fine clothes made to order)
121. Psammas Durviir (tailor)
122. Elhazir's Exotica (rare and unusual gifts and treasures)
123. The Baths (bath house, wrestling gym, and beauty parlor)
124. Wayscross Inn
125. The Ivory Jack (tavern)
126. Phaesha's (boarding house)
127. Vondor's Shoes & Boots
128. The Feasting Board (eatery)
129. House Hiloar Warehouse
130. The Lame Camel (tavern)
131. Blackhand Lhaol's Smithy
132. House Misrim (warehouse)
133. House of Kraliqh (warehouse)
134. The Scarlet Spear (inn)
135. The Lazy Lizard (tavern)
136. The Watchful Lynz (inn)
137. Nyaril warehouse
138. House Misrim (warehouse)
139. The Swinging Gate (inn)
140. The Nine Fires (inn)
141. The Three Bars (inn)
142. The Tired Traveler (inn)
143. The Wink and Kiss (tavern)
144. Thousandheads Trading Coster Warehouses (merchant company warehouse)
145. The Pork Market (yards)
146. Dragoneye Dealing Coster Warehouse (merchant company warehouse)
147. Ssantusas's (rental) Warehouse
148. Dhalgim's Yard (fuel such as wood, charcoal, kindling, oils)
149. The Copper Cockatrice (hardware shop)
150. Irriphar's Inn
151. The Murdered Manticore (inn)
152. The World Serpent (sometimes the Wild Goose; inn)

The **Night Parade Warehouse** is the easternmost warehouse numbered 137.

Local Rumors

Roll 1d8 for a random rumor, or pick one appropriate to the PC's questions.

1. "Yep, I believe that all these wizard murders are the work of old Vangerdahast, the royal magician. 'Tis said he spies on all the wizards in Cormyr, and if one starts working against the crown, he won't last long." (True that Vangerdahast spies on wizards and takes action against those who plot against the crown, but the royal wizard has had nothing to do with these killings.)

2. "All these storms! And when the days were clear too! I haven't seen anything like it in 20 years." (True.)

3. "Well, I wouldn't be surprised if all this storming isn't the work of the High Hand of the Lady, whose nose is out of joint again because no one will give him a title." (If pursued, the High Hand of the Lady is Daramos Lauthyr, hm P11 CG, the high priest of the only temple in town which is dedicated to Tymora. During the Time of Troubles, Tymora's avatar manifested herself in Arabel. Ever since then, Daramos has been insisting that he and his temple are the most sacred of those who follow that deity. This has provoked many political clashes with Myrmeen and the King of Cormyr himself. The rumor itself is false; Daramos has had nothing to do with the bad weather.)

4. "Don't you think it's awfully strange that the most powerful wizards in Arabel just happen to be gone when all of this wizard killing starts?" (Partially true, but the absence of some of the powerful mages is coincidental. Mellomir, LN hm M27, is in Suzail visiting the Society of Stalwart Adventurers. Jestra, NG hf Tra18, has taken a commission to enhance the beauty of a far-off princess and is likewise out of town. Myschanta Halarra, CG hf Abj14, was in fact one of the victims, but her body hasn't been found because it is in Silverymoon, due to a *contingency* spell. Finally, Theavos Thontar, LN hm W17, is in Suzail, visiting Vangerdahast, for whom he spies.)

5. "Gondegal has returned and is prowling the city, killing wizards under the cover of storms conjured by spellcasters who serve him." (False. Gondegal was a warrior who rebelled against Cormyr and briefly held Arabel many years ago. When King Azoun IV and his army approached the city, however, Gondegal was mysteriously gone and has never been seen since.)

6. "Well you know something's wrong when the cats are acting up." (Partially true. Not all the cats are acting up. While all are a bit surly because of the nightly downpours, only those that prowl in the vicinity of the Night Parade lair or the murder scenes are really agitated. In those areas, several have been observed walking around with their back hair on end and their tails puffed out. They have smelled the Night Parade creature Vectal, whose natural form is that of a three-headed dog. Cats are considered sacred messengers of the gods in Cormyr, and it is against the law to kill a cat, alter a cat, or keep one in a cage. Cats are often a conversation topic in Cormyr because of their special status, and when they are bothered, people are sure to talk about it.)

7. "Well, it's been about a year since Myrmeen adopted that girl. Somehow I have the feeling in my bones that she has something to do with these killings." (True, in a way. While Krystin had nothing directly to do with them, her presence in Arabel and her affiliation with Myrmeen is a primary reason for the Night Parade wanting revenge.)

8. "I don't think that we have any more to worry about. Those stupid Zhentarim became reckless and carved their sign on the victims' chests. The Purple Dragons have wiped them all out or captured them. I tell you we should relax." (False. The Zhent sign was a red herring left by the Night Parade.)

Malabar and can identify him by the PCs' description of the location, if the heroes have not figured out who he was by now. She howls in rage when the matter of the Zhentarim symbol is brought to her attention. Her temper is such that the rugged, heavily armed guards in the chamber look ready to run. At the height of her anger, she whips out her long sword, and in frustration slices cleanly through a standing candelabrum (her blade is a *sword of sharpness +5*).

After a few moments, Myrmeen calms down and sticks the tip of her sword into the wooden floor.

She then addresses the PCs:

> "Forgive my outburst. This is the third murder in as many days, brought about by those Zhentarim scum. I thought my guards had killed, captured, or driven them all underground after the recent murders, but still they plague me! How *dare* they!"
>
> She pauses, takes a long breath, then continues, looking at you with an arched eyebrow.
>
> "Well, it is certain that I need more help. Quality, experienced help. What do you say, are you up to hunting down a few Zhents for me? We have killed or executed several of them, but there are still a few left as prisoners. Perhaps you could persuade them to tell you where their companions might be hiding and why on earth they have gone on this murder spree." She pauses, takes a long breath, then continues, looking at you with an arched eyebrow.

If the PCs mention that the druid was killed by a winged, clawed monster, she adds, "And I want you to find out what kind of creature they have conjured from Cyric's Palace."

If the PCs show any interest, she offers them a grand prize: if they don't have their own charter as a licensed adventuring company in Cormyr, she suggests that they get one. These generally cost upwards of 1,000 golden lions (Cormyrian gold pieces), plus hefty annual dues. In fact, the PCs wandering through Cormyr without such a charter or under hire to an employer (e.g., caravan guards) is illegal and could cost them a huge fine and forfeiture of their belongings. Lord Myrmeen points this out if the characters hesitate, and she offers to overlook the indiscretion once they accept. If they decline, she tries to shame them into accepting. If the PCs already have a charter, she offers them 1,200 golden lions.

Once the PCs accept the mission, Myrmeen recommends that they stay undercover, since her own soldiers have been unsuccessful. If the Zhents do not know the PCs are looking for them, then the heroes may have more luck, she points out.

Finally, Myrmeen gives the PCs a ring with a black onyx stone inscribed with a gold "M." She tells them that

they can show this ring to any soldier, who will recognize it as a symbol to render whatever aid, information, and assistance he can to the PCs. If shown to Alanaerle, the proprietor of the Weary Knight Inn (**#4** on the city map), she provides rooms, stabling, and meals at no charge. Myrmeen encourages the PCs not to use the ring too often, and she emphasizes that it does not mean that they can command her garrison. If the PCs are a little on the light side, the DM may want to have Myrmeen assign one or two NPC soldiers to help the PCs.

Myrmeen Lhal, lord of Arabel: AL CG; AC 2; MV 12; R13; hp 66; THAC0 8; #AT by weapon; Dmg by weapon; S 16; D 17; C 15; I 14; W 14; Ch 18. Myrmeen is always armed with her *long sword of sharpness +5,* but she is also proficient with a crossbow (light or heavy), a horseman's mace, and dagger. She carries three *potions of healing* whenever she is out adventuring or going into combat.

Tracking Down the Night Parade

Arabel is a large city (population over 17,000), and it holds few clues for the PCs. The DM should allow the PCs to conduct their investigation as they wish, fleshing out whatever minor encounters are logical. The following episodes are the most likely avenues for the PCs to pursue. They are not in any special order, but they can be used however the players proceed. If the PCs go to any other places in Arabel, they find that the people are generally upset about the recent thunderstorms. There is a 35% chance that an inhabitant or visitor has heard one of the rumors in the sidebar.

The Weary Knight Inn

The owner of this inn, Alanaerle, is a fat, jolly woman with a face so ugly it can scare children (0-level human, AC 10, 4 hp). If shown Myrmeen's ring, she provides the PCs with free comfortable rooms, meals, and stabling for their mounts. In the evening, she invites any bard PC to come to the common room where bards and minstrels spin love tales and ballads in exchange for half-price rooms (1 gp).

Inside the common room is a stone coffin next to a wall. Its lid is carved in the form of a knight in armor; one of his hands is on his breast, and the other lies by his side. This strange fixture was salvaged from a burned-down church, and it is sealed with lead. It was the inspiration for the Inn's name, and no one is allowed to tamper with it. If the DM wants to stock the coffin with a lost treasure, it should be of at least 5,000 gp value, but stealing it earns the wrath of Myrmeen Lhal. There are no clues within the coffin. PCs can hear 1–3 rumors speaking with the inn's customers or Alanaerle (see sidebar).

Interrogating the Zhentarim

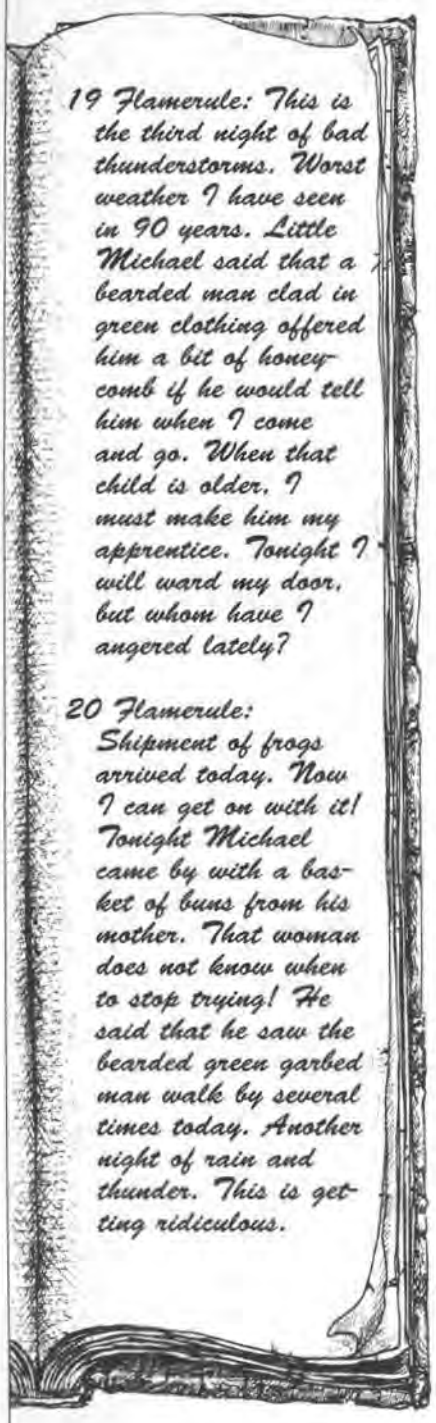
Myrmeen mentioned that she had several Zhent prisoners in her dungeons. If asked, she has her chief jailer show the PCs to the dungeon in the town citadel (area **#1** on city map). There are three prisoners: Otto, a brutal-looking half-orc fighter; Marbus, an innocent-looking, soft-speaking dwarven thief who would sell his mother for a song; and Shalta, a 0-level half-elven courtesan (Ch 17) and spy. All wear rags, are heavily chained, and are badly bruised. Each is heavily guarded in a separate cell.

Otto does not willingly answer PCs' questions unless he is *charmed.* He laughs at any threat of torture or harm and says he would welcome death so that he can serve Cyric as one of his palace guards.

Marbus and Shalta talk freely. Neither has any idea what caused them to earn Myrmeen's wrath. Yes, they were starting a thieves' guild in Arabel, but they have not committed any murders of any sort — well, not the ones that Myrmeen is upset about. And they had not done any thieving yet — well, not too much, anyway. They did know that Epicot and Myschanta were powerful wizards but had no plans to kill them. Neither of them had heard of the druid Artos. As far as they know, all of the rest of their guild members were hanged or killed in battle by Myrmeen's troops; they are the only survivors.

All of the above can be verified through *charm person, detect lie,* or similar spells. While the last statement (their other guild members are all dead) is true, Marbus also knows that the wizard Pontifel (See "Living Spellcasters") is a secret worshiper of Cyric and a Zhentarim agent. It was Pontifel who

Handout #3 Epicot's Diary



19 Flamerule: This is the third night of bad thunderstorms. Worst weather I have seen in 90 years. Little Michael said that a bearded man clad in green clothing offered him a bit of honeycomb if he would tell him when I come and go. When that child is older, I must make him my apprentice. Tonight I will ward my door, but whom have I angered lately?

20 Flamerule: Shipment of frogs arrived today. Now I can get on with it! Tonight Michael came by with a basket of buns from his mother. That woman does not know when to stop trying! He said that he saw the bearded green garbed man walk by several times today. Another night of rain and thunder. This is getting ridiculous.

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did the initial groundwork for the other Zhentarim coming into Arabel, but technically he is not a member of the guild. Marbus does not volunteer this information and lies if asked the direct question, "Are there any more Zhentarim in Arabel?" or something similar. He reveals it only as the result of the PCs catching him in the lie or if he is *charmed*. Marbus is a 5th-level thief and has a good chance of making his save with his dwarven resistance to magic (+3 to saving throw).

Walking the Bear

PCs who befriended Blug might get the idea to take the bear out of his cell in the citadel and lead him around town to sniff out the "bad yellow bird with black hooks." Blug is certain he can recognize its scent. ("Yes, I never forget. Smells like old honey.")

Unfortunately, walking a black bear around a civilized area attracts a great deal of attention. Fishwives scream, children run away howling in fear, dogs bark fiercely (causing Blug to attack them), cats hiss and spit, and merchants yell at the PCs to get the wild animal away from their establishments. Eventually the town watch shows up and, even if shown Myrmeen's ring, encourages the PCs to put the bear back in his cell.

Walking Blug around at night when the streets are deserted has a small chance of helping. Generally, the streets are fairly empty around 11:00 P.M., but at midnight the Night Parade starts its nightly thunderstorm. The torrent of rain that falls on the city wipes out any odor of the "bad bird." During the one hour period between 11:00 P.M. and midnight, Blug might (40% chance) detect Jenko's scent if he and the PCs happen to pass the warehouse where the Night Parade is headquartered. (The warehouse they bought from a trading company is labeled **#137** on the city map.)

Dead Wizards

Myrmeen mentioned the deaths of Epicot and Myschanta on previous nights. If the PCs follow up on these names, they learn that the two were local wizards. Rumors abound among the populace about the grisly deaths that they suffered (see sidebar), but the truth is even more shocking. Epicot had the Zhentarim symbol carved in his chest, and his head was removed. In Myschanta's case, however, it appears that she may have died in her home (lots of blood), but her body is missing. Epicot's remains were buried the day after his death.

If the PCs go to the murder scenes, the DM can place them in any unlabeled building in the city, although it should be a fair distance from the Night Parade's warehouse (**#137**). Both homes are roped off and guarded by city soldiers. Showing them Myrmeen's ring enables the PCs to enter and investigate the scenes, but they are escorted by a pair of soldiers (F2, hp 14, AC 4, THAC0 19, Dmg 1–8).

Epicot's Tower

This is a solitary 30'-tall tower with a gaping 10'-diameter hole in the side halfway up. The sides of the hole are smooth, as if something cleanly disintegrated a section of the wall. Some of the local citizens noticed the hole at dawn and called the watch. The watch pounded on the only door and then broke it in (to their rue, three of them were burned badly by the *fire trap* that Epicot had placed there). They found Epicot's beheaded body in his bed. Frogs were all over the place.

Exploration of the tower reveals a spellcasting chamber on the top floor, and among other mundane belongings are a *wand of wonder* (40 charges), a spellbook (35 spells up to 5th level, DM's choice; one should be *fire trap*), and his journals. The DM should feel free to add more journal entries. The most recent journal entries are shown on Handout #3.

PCs who wish to take any of the magical or other items in the tower are prevented from doing so by the soldiers guarding the house. Although they are cooperative in allowing the PCs to search the premises because of Myrmeen's ring, it takes a bit more to convince them to allow the PCs to remove items. This situation should be a role-playing encounter in which the heroes must make a convincing argument as to why they can take the items. If they come up with a really good idea, such as that the items are "material evidence," the soldiers permit the PCs to take them. Another alternative is for the PCs to go back to Myrmeen and ask her to order the soldiers to entrust the articles to the adventurers. Using this "easy way out" annoys Lord Lhal.

Under any resolution, the soldiers insist on a signed receipt so that the property is properly accounted for when the wizard's estate is settled.

Further exploration reveals that there are still a few wisps of weblike material on the sides of the walls. Brokus used his sticky fingers and toes to climb up the wall with Zupar on his back. Zupar transformed the wall to water, and Brokus jumped in and took care of Epicot before he could get off a spell. Brokus and Zupar are detailed in the "Night Parade" sidebar.

PCs might look for Michael who, by the description in the journal, sounds as though he might be a small boy. He is actually 12 years old and the only son of Maggie Rollins, a widowed baker who lives and works a block away. If the PCs track Michael down (by asking neighbors or guards), they learn from him more of the bearded man's description: he has a scar on his forehead, he is about 6' tall, and he has strong breath that smells like honey. His complexion is florid and he has a beaming smile. This is the human form that Vectal shapeshifts into when spying for the Night Parade.

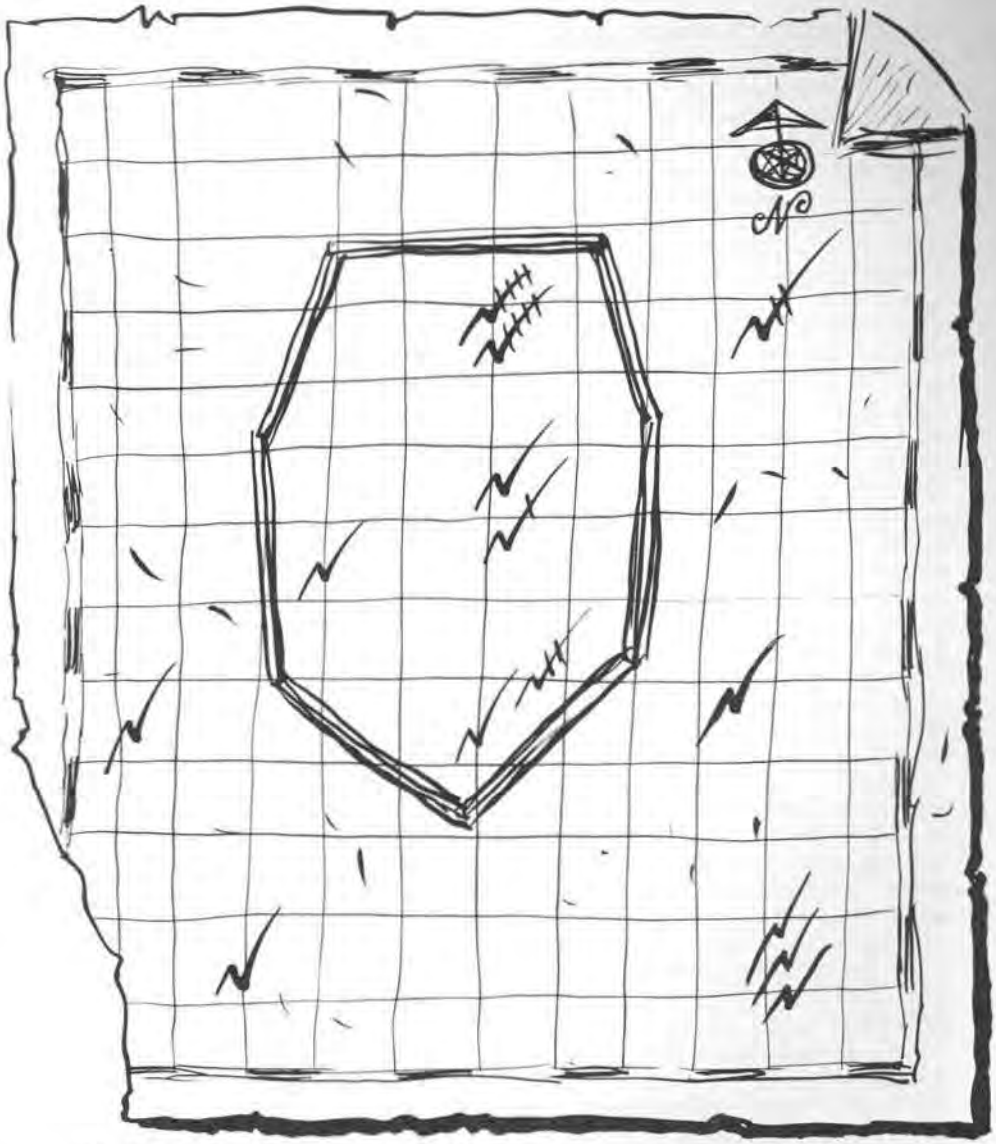
Myschanta's House

Myschanta lived in a one-story house with a 20' wooden tower that she climbed to look at the stars and, most recently, observe all the lightning strikes. Like Epicot's tower, Myschanta's house has a 10' diameter hole in it by the back alley, and the ends of the wood look like as though were cleanly disintegrated. In the alley are some obvious scorch marks on a stone wall.

The Night Parade did not fare well with Myschanta. When Zupar transformed the wall into water, it triggered an *alarm* spell. Myschanta grabbed her *wand of fire* and got off one *fireball* before she was killed by Brokus. Even as she died, she inflicted damage on Brokus with the *burning hands* feature of the *wand*. (Zupar took the *wand*.) Myschanta's body was immediately *teleported* to the Lady Alustriel of Silverymoon by a *contingency* spell. She will be *resurrected* in a few weeks, but she does not make an appearance in this adventure.

The PCs find another spellbook (30 spells up to 4th level; DM's choice; about half of them should be abjuration spells), and a strange drawing in Myschanta's study. The drawing (Handout #4) is a rough depiction of where lightning strikes are landing in the city. Myschanta had been bothered by all the thunder and lightning, and had been recording where lightning strikes had been landing, but it is up to the PCs to figure this out. The handout depicts a rough outline of Arabel's walls and jagged marks represent lightning bolts. Those with a slash through them represent multiple strikes.

If the PCs ask around the neighborhood, some of the residents do indeed remember a bearded man in green clothes wandering around prior to the murder. Again, the guards make the PCs sign for any of Myschanta's items they take with them.



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Living Spellcasters

The PCs should learn from rumors around town and from their interview with Myrmeen that someone, apparently the Zhentarim, is trying to kill powerful spellcasters around town. Several are out of town presently (see rumor #4 for details), but some are still in the area, and they are scheduled for execution by the Night Parade. Among them are **Melba** (CG hf W11), **Pontifel** (CE hm W15), and **Daramos Lauthyr** (CG hm P11). An attempt on Melba's life is made on 21 Flamerule, the first night the PCs are in town; the next target is Pontifel,

on 22 Flamerule. Thus far, the Night Parade has no hard plans for Daramos, because his temple is guarded too well. Only Pontifel realizes that someone is out to get them, and none of them have yet connected the bad weather to the deaths of their fellow spellcasters.

The PCs might wish to conduct surveillance on the homes or the temple to ambush anyone coming at night to murder them. An ambush at the Temple of Tymora proves fruitless, since not even the Night Parade elite squad dares infiltrate a Temple containing a powerful priest, 24 additional priests, and 336 other temple staff members and guards.

Initially Vectal, in his distinctive green clothing and with breath that smells like honey, shows up to look over the place one more time. He makes discreet inquiries of neighbors, nearby barkeeps, and gossips to see what he can learn about the spellcaster's routines, habits and protection. He then returns to the warehouse, reports, and collaborates with the others on the best plan to kill the wizard.

Following the spy back to the warehouse can provide a great deal of excitement for a thief PC or one who is invisible. The DM should strive to make this difficult as Vectal stops at every turn to ensure he is not being tailed. He uses circuitous routes to get to the warehouse or elude anyone shadowing his path, if he detects he is being followed (only 5% chance if a PC is invisible; failure of a thief PC's Hide in Shadows chance, and 70% otherwise). The DM should note Vectal's increased speed while in his natural form. Cornering him results in his fighting to the death, with no thought of surrender. Even if captured, he gives no information. Capturing or killing this spy means that the Night Parade killer calls off the murder for the night.

If the PCs lie in wait at night at a wizard's house, two Night Parade members will arrive at 2:00 A.M., while the nightly storm is at its peak, and they try to infiltrate. These are not the previous killers, as both were burned badly by Myschanta, but two of the Night Parade members created by the DM. How they try to get in and kill the mage is for the DM to decide. Before this happens, the DM should review the two creatures and make any adjustments necessary to ensure that they provide plenty of challenge to the PCs.

Once the PCs ambush the Night Parade killers, they try to flee. If cornered, they fight to the death using every means at their disposal. Casting *speak with dead* results only in warbling laughs and curses in an unknown language. Using *tongues* in conjunction with the *speak with dead* allows the PCs to understand the language, but they will be horrified at how disgusting the Night Parade members are in their descriptions of the PCs and all their kin.

Another tactic the PCs might try is to collect all of the spellcasters (not only the two mentioned, but also several other lower-level wizards) in one spot, like the citadel or the Temple of Tymora, and guard them. Protecting them in this manner forestalls any Night Parade attacks against the spellcasters, because the elite squad do not want so much attention drawn to themselves, and they do not want to attack several powerful spellcasters at once.

Confronting Pontifel

If the PCs extracted the information from Myrmeen's prisoners that Pontifel is also a Zhentarim agent, Myrmeen charges them with the duty to arrest him. His home is immediately west of and next to The Lavender Lion festhall (**#92** on the city map). The PCs can be directed there by Myrmeen or any of her soldiers.

Let the PCs make whatever preparations they wish for the arrest, but Pontifel does not resist. Indeed, he welcomes the PCs and invites them into his home! He has been scrying about in a *magic mirror,* and he realizes that someone has falsely implicated the Zhentarim. Having watched the PCs interrogate the prisoners, he has been following their actions ever since.

Pontifel is a 6' tall thin mage with piercing green eyes and an oily smile. He appears to be about 45 years old, but there are no touches of gray in his thick black hair or moustache. He admits serving Cyric and the Zhentarim, but he insists that someone else is behind the murders. He makes the following offer to the PCs: if they allow him to accompany and assist in their efforts, he will gladly remove himself from Arabel along with the captives languishing in Myrmeen's dungeon, and he promises to deliver to Myrmeen Lhal an absolute guarantee that neither the Zhentarim nor their agents will darken Arabel's gates for the next 10 years.

Pontifel is absolutely sincere in his offer. He has received several nightmares from minions of the Prince of Lies who have growlingly ordered him to find out who is giving Cyric and his loyal Zhentarim an undeserved reputation. Using the axiom "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," Pontifel truly desires to find out who or what is behind all of this. If his offer is taken, he gives the PCs his best efforts. If the PCs desire, he submits to a *detect lie* spell to confirm that the Zhentarim have had nothing to do with the murders of the spellcasters and that he is sincere in his offer. He also believes that he has the authority to make such an offer.

Such an offer poses a dilemma for the PCs. Do they ally themselves with an evil Zhentarim wizard in order to uncover and destroy a greater evil? If they ask Myrmeen what to do, she ponders the matter thoughtfully, since the offer of no Zhentarim meddling for 10 years would eliminate one of many thorny problems that she has to deal with as a ruler. She orders a *detect lie* to confirm Pontifel's tale (if the PCs haven't done so), gives the PCs the result, and asks them for recommendations. She does whatever most of the PCs recommend. If the decision is to try to capture Pontifel, he uses his *ring of teleportation* to escape, and he goes to the Citadel of the Raven. Arabel then faces Zhentarim interference for the rest of Myrmeen's reign and well beyond.

Pontifel: AL CE; W15; AC 2; MV 12; hp 45; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 +3; SA spells; S 11, D 16, C 15, I 17, W 12; Ch 13. Pontifel owns a *dagger +3, a ring of teleportation,* and *bracers of defense* AC 4.

Spells: *charm person, color spray, feather fall, magic missile; hypnotic pattern, irritation* (×2), *levitate, stinking cloud; fireball* (×3), *monster summoning I, suggestion; charm monster* (×2), *minor globe of invulnerability; minor creation, polymorph self; Bigby's interposing hand* (×2), *cone of cold, wall of iron* (×2); *chain lightning, monster summoning IV; delayed blast fireball.*

Lightning Strikes

PCs may connect the weird weather with the murders. If a PC gets to a high spot (like a wall that borders the city) during the storm and observes where lightning is falling, he eventually has

Night Parade Creature Generator

Before the adventure, the DM must create four additional Night Parade creatures to fill out the elite squad infiltrating Arabel.

1. Determine size (1d6).

1–2	S	HD 3–4	Dmg 1d6
3–5	M	HD 5–7	Dmg 2d4
6	L	HD 8–10	Dmg 2d6

2. Locomotion (1d8).

1	Flies
2–6	Walks
7	Slithers like snake
8	Oozes like slime

3. Skin texture (1d8).

1–4	Tough flesh (AC 7)
5	Woody (AC 5)
6	Waxy (AC 9, weapons cause half damage)
7	Stony (AC 2)
8	Metallic (AC –2)

4. Number of attacks (1d8).

1–2	1
3–5	2
6–7	3
8	4

5. Source of attacks (1d10).

1–3	Hands/claws
4–5	Mouth
6–7	Tentacle
8–9	Extra arm or leg
10	Extra head

6. Primary color (1d10).

1–4	Pink
5	Black
6	Red
7	Green
8	Gray
9	Orange
10	Brown

7. Shapeshifter? (1d100).

1–60	Shapeshifter
61–100	Non-shapeshifter

8. Saving throw chart (1d4).

1	Warrior
2	Rogue
3	Wizard
4	Priest

9. Magic resistance (1d100).

1–70	Nil
71–80	5%
81–90	10%
91–95	20%
96–00	30%

10. Extra abilities. (Small creatures have a 40% chance of one extra ability; medium creatures a 60% chance of 1d3 abilities; large creatures one extra ability and a 70% chance of 1d4 additional abilities. Attack abilities are in addition to the creature's normal attacks.)

1d100	
01–04	Shoots 1d4 mini-*fireballs* from hands (Dmg 1d6+1) every other round.
05–08	Turns *invisible* once a day as per spell.
09–12	*Spider climbs* at will.
13–16	Laughs crazily, affecting opponents as with *Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter* once per day. Creature stops laughing after it is hit.
17–20	Musical instrument emerges from body and hypnotizes all within hearing. Small creature has one instrument with 15' range; medium creatures 2–5 instruments, 50' range; large creatures 6–10 instruments, 500' range. A saving throw vs. spell with a –10 penalty allows the hearer to avoid the effect. Bardic singing also negates the music for all who hear the bard (the bard must first make his saving throw). Music stops once the creature is hit.
21–24	Summons thunderstorm (70% chance), blizzard (10%), hurricane (10%), or cyclone (10%) once a day.
25–28	*Call lightning* from thunderstorm 1d10 times per day.
29–32	Body emits acid. +1 damage on all hits. Treat as a rust monster when struck by metal objects.
33–36	Body emits poison. All hits by creature require saving throw vs. poison or suffer additional 15 hp damage.
37–40	Transmutes stone or wood into water by touch. 100 square feet (up to 2' thick) per round can be affected.
41–44	Transmutes glass or crystal into *glassteel* by touch. Affects 20 cubic feet per round.
45–48	Body emits foul odor, like *stinking cloud* spell but with no visible vapors. Night Parade creatures are unaffected by the odor.
49–52	Extra mouth that puckers and emits high-pitched whistle that can be heard up to 100' away. On the first round any listeners must save vs. paralyzation or suffer –1 on THAC0. Each subsequent round of listening requires an additional –1 on saving throw.
53–56	Creature spews liquid fire (as *oil of fiery burning*) from mouth, causing 2d10 hp damage (save vs. breath weapon for half) to creature within 25' once every three rounds. Immune to fire damage.
57–60	Mild electrical charge with each hit (+1 damage). Immune to electrical damage.
61–64	Assumes gaseous form three times per day.
65–68	Regenerates 2 hp per round until the creature has –10 hp. Fire damage results in regeneration accelerating to 4 hp per round.
69–72	Transmutes flesh into wood, stone, glass, or other substance by touch three times per day. (Save vs. petrification negates).
73–76	*Water breathes* at will.
77–80	Creature has 1d8 extra eyes. The viewer must save vs. spell with a –1 penalty for each extra eye or be *charmed*. A natural roll of 1 means the viewer is dominated by the creature.
81–84	The creature has the head of a dog or wolf. If the creature tastes the blood of someone, it can always track him down as long as he is within 500 miles.
85–88	One ear grows at will to 2' diameter. Creature has ability of *clairaudience* up to 50' away, as spell.
89–92	Immune to spells and magical weapons. Unenchanted weapons inflict double damage.
93–96	Creates *darkness* 3×day.
97–00	Paralyzing touch 3×day. (Save vs. paralyzation negates.)

11. Final touches.

Give the creature a name and a description conforming to the die rolls. Review it carefully to ensure that the PCs have a fair chance against it, and vice versa. If the die rolls don't seem to make sense, change the results. If you want the creature to have an extra ability not on the chart, go ahead and use it. The chart is simply a collection of ideas that can be expanded. Generally, the more unusual you can make the creature, the greater the challenge for the PCs.

The Night Parade Squad

The Night Parade is from another world. They prey upon helpless populations on Toril (and perhaps other worlds). Their motives are not clear, though they create others of their kind through strange artifacts and rituals. It has been speculated that their home world is dying out and that they cannot create more of their kind except through these mystic processes.

The current squad of Night Parade members in Arabel plan to energize an artifact *gate* to bring 100 of their kind into Arabel, a new city for the Night Parade. Once they have brought their comrades into the city, the Night Parade plans to cause the population to become drowsy through hypnotic music played by one of their members. While all are lulled, they will revenge themselves by killing Myrmeen Lhal, her adopted daughter Krystin, and their adventuring companion Ord.

Each Night Parade creature is different because of their physiology and the strange rituals that create them. Each has the common goal of increasing their population, and each is living (not undead), but that is all that they have in common. Some are cannibalistic, others live for the joy of hypnotizing their opponents through music, and some like turning living flesh into wood, stone, or something else.

Jenko: INT average; AL CE; AC 5; MV 3, fly 24 (B); HD 5; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 4, Dmg 2d4 each; SZ M (5′ long); New Monster. Jenko has yellow fluttery wings like a dragonfly and four hooked blackened claws under her chitinous torso. Her face is that of a wild-eyed, black-haired woman who is perpetually laughing in a high, chittery voice. Jenko may turn invisible once per day, which is how she normally gets out of the warehouse if she leaves during daylight. Note that while invisible, her humming, rustling wings still make noise. She smells like old sour honey.

Brokus: INT low; AL CE; AC 7, MV 6; HD 9, hp 54 (now 33 due to damage inflicted by Myschanta's wand); THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2d12/2d12; SZ L (7′ tall); New Monster. Brokus can *shapechange* into a 6′-tall, powerfully built man. In natural form he looks like a 7′-tall man whose flesh resembles raw meat. He is very slow (+3 penalty to initiative roll), but he packs a wallop with his bony fists. Brokus has the ability to *spider climb* at will. Small holes in the ends of his fingers and toes exude a weblike filament that allows him to climb the smoothest of walls with no problem. He is often used to climb the wall of a victim's home, while another Night Parade member hangs onto his back.

Zupar: INT high; AL CE; AC 7, MV 6; HD 4, hp 30 (now 9 due to damage inflicted by Myschanta's wand); THAC0 17; #AT 1, Dmg 1d6; SZ S (3′ tall); New Monster. Zupar can *shapechange* and usually takes the form of a halfling, but he sometimes (20% chance) forgets to make the feet hairy. Although not powerful in combat, he can transmute up to 100 square feet of wood or stone (up to 2′ thick) into water. He often hangs on Brokus's back until he creates an opening in a victim's home. In melee, he can surprise opponents by merely touching the floor and causing them to fall down to a lower floor or basement. Zupar has a *wand of fire* (22 charges) that he lifted from Myschanta's house. He knows the command words for the *burning hands* and *fireball* features of the wand, but not the others. His natural form is hideous: he looks like a large, walking brain on four legs. A whiplike tentacle protrudes from the top of his body.

Lord Tempos: INT genius; AL CE; AC –2, MV 12; HD 6, hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 1, Dmg 2d4; SZ M (6′ tall); New Monster. Lord Tempos has a greenish hue to his steel-hard skin. He appears on the roof of the warehouse each night and summons a thunderstorm to the area. While it rains and thunders, he stands entranced, letting the rain bounce off his skin. His tiny hands cause no damage, but his mouth is full of dangerous razor sharp teeth. Those who first see him might mistake him for a wight or ghoul. Lord Tempos is the leader of the Night Parade squad and does not leave the warehouse,0 since he cannot *shapechange.*

Evpoter: INT high; AL CE; AC 2, MV 12; HD 8, hp 55; THAC0 13; #AT 1, Dmg 1d10; SZ M (5′ tall); New Monster. Evpoter looks like a red-haired flower seller when she *shapechanges* to human form. One of the more powerful Night Parade members, she has a 10% resistance to magic and is immune to any form of lightning attacks. She can call down five bolts of lightning each day (one every four rounds) as long as it is storming. In her natural form, she has red hair and slightly glowing gray eyes that match the stony color (and texture) of her skin.

Vectal: INT high; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12 (18 in natural form); HD 7; hp 44; THAC0 13; #AT 3, Dmg 2d4 each; SZ M (5 ½′ tall); New Monster. When *shapechanged,* Vectal looks like a black bearded man with a florid face and wide smile. He is dressed in green clothing, and his breath smells like honey. In natural form, he looks like a large three headed dog, with two heads up front and one where the tail would normally be (making surprise against him nearly impossible).

the idea that there is a pattern to the lightning strikes. Specifically, he can determine that, while most bolts land randomly, every night five bolts land in just about the same locale within the city. He should be able to get a very good idea of the general area of the city where this is happening. This is the very thing that the wizard Myschanta had noticed before she was murdered.

Discovering the exact location of the warehouse is a matter of asking about the lightning strikes around the city. Everyone in the vicinity of the warehouse has noticed that lightning has been striking close by and is sure that Tymora has protected them from being hit thus far. Some people say that it is landing just "over there," others say "over that way, about a block," and those who were really close think it was practically right on top of them ("I swear it landed just next door"). Through some role-playing and information gathering, the PCs should be able to deduce where most of the lightning is hitting.

Too Much Attention

PCs who ambush and kill a Night Parade member gain the attention of the community, who are grateful that heroic adventurers killed such a creature. Citizens are appalled and horrified at the appearance of these things. Word spreads.

The Night Parade hears of it and makes inquiries. The good news is that the attacks on the wizards stop. The bad news is that the PCs themselves are targeted for at least one attack by the squad. All members of the Night Parade squad (except for Lord Tempos and Evpoter, who are busy charging the *gate*) attempt the kill at night. Even if they are unsuccessful, they leave behind a holy symbol of Cyric to continue giving the impression that the Zhentarim are involved.

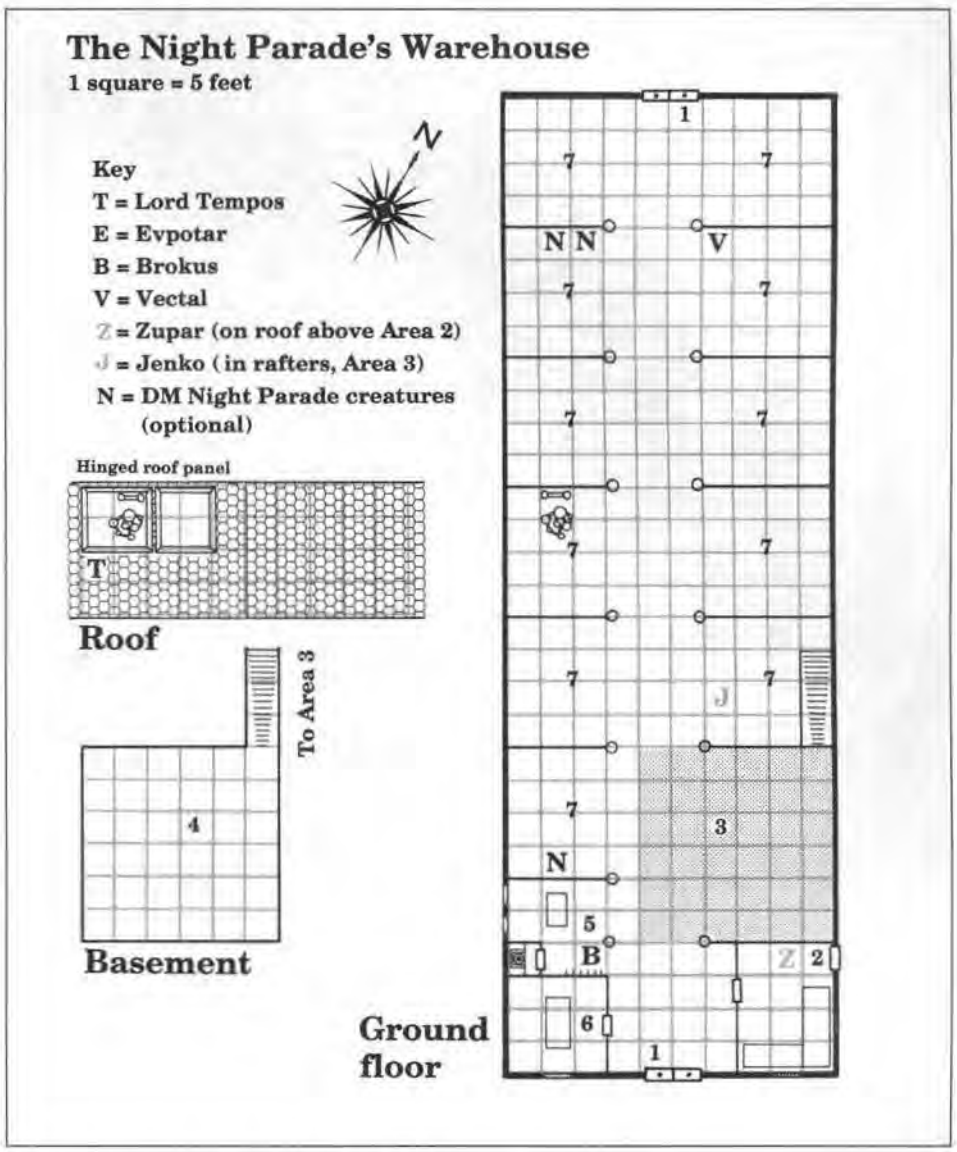
Once Myrmeen Lhal finds out about Night Parade involvement, she summons the PCs to her palace and tells more about her former battle with them in Calimport. She surmises correctly that the Night Parade has come to Arabel and is planning some dreadful evil. She encourages the PCs to go out and find them. Until their lair is found, Myrmeen stays in the palace with triple the normal guard detail to ensure that no harm comes to her, or her wards, Krystin and Ord. For her part, Krystin is terrified by the news, making Myrmeen all the more certain not to leave her side.

The Final Encounter

Eventually the PCs should put together the clues and determine where the Night Parade is headquartered. If requested, Myrmeen sends a company of 100 heavy infantrymen (F2, AC 4, THAC0 19, Dmg 1d8) commanded by a trusted captain (F5, AC 2, THAC0 16, Dmg 1d10). The soldiers can be used only to help gain entry to the warehouse and then block it off, as Myrmeen realizes that heroes like the PCs have the only realistic chance to take the Night Parade out. Sending her troops in is a last resort since she realizes that many of them would die.

If the PCs seem undermanned for the task, the DM could have Myrmeen don her *sword of sharpness* and join the PCs. In this event, the DM should give one of the players (probably the one with the weakest PC) a sheet with Myrmeen's statistics and items and let that player run her during the combat.

Several of the Night Parade creatures keep watch at all hours through various peepholes in the warehouse. As soon as the PCs show up or make a move, Lord Tempos summons a thunderstorm from nowhere. Any grand plans that the PCs have for burning the warehouse down with the Night Parade in it will fizzle as driving rain keeps the headquarters nice and wet. Keeping them under siege is not a good option, since eventually their artifact *gate* is powered and more Night Parade creatures *gate* into the warehouse. Eventually a musical Night Parade creature comes through (1% cumulative chance every time one comes through), and its hypnotic tune lulls the entire city into a trance (save vs. spell with –10 penalty to negate). Then all of the Night Parade creatures emerge and wreak havoc. The only good option is to go in after them.



Warehouse Key

The warehouse is 50′ × 200′ and was previously owned by the Nyaril merchant house. Vectal, posing as a new trader, offered a price for the warehouse that was too good to pass up. All goods of importance were removed and the various storage areas are relatively empty except for an occasional broken box, bits of lumber, and several rat bones (eaten by members of the Night Parade). The building itself is made of stout wood, and the floor is stone. The roof arches up and reaches a 20′ high apex. There is no ceiling in the warehouse as the beams and joists under the roof are exposed. It is completely dark inside unless the PCs bring light.

The locations of squad members are noted on the map, and the DM should remember to eliminate any that the PCs have dispatched in previous encounters.

During the battle the Night Parade members will not retreat, surrender, or make morale checks. They fight to the death like cornered wolverines. If they are in the process of getting the last batch of lightning bolts down to open their *gate,* they fight with an even greater frenzy (+1 to hit).

1. Main Doors. These stout wooden doors are barred from the inside. Unless the PCs enter via *dimension door* or some other magical means, they must be battered down. Myrmeen's troops will do this for the PCs. After six bashes, the doors give way. Zupar uses the *wand of fire* to blast a *fireball* outside to catch the troops and any PCs in the area. If the PCs enter the south entrance, they are confronted by Brokus, Zupar, and DM Creature #3. If they come through the northern entrance, they are confronted by Vectal and DM Creatures #1 and 2. Those creatures defending the northern door are aided by creatures from the southern door in one round and vice versa, unless both doors are assaulted at once.

2. Inventory Office. This is a self-contained room, complete with an 11'-high ceiling. Previously clerical workers kept track of inventory coming in and out of the warehouse. Now all that is left are several stools and dusty work tables. The windows of this room are barred and the single door is locked. Atop the roof of this room (but still within the warehouse) hides Zupar. When the PCs enter, he jumps down, brandishes his *wand of fire,* and taunts the PCs to fight him.

3. Large Goods Area. This part of the warehouse was where large goods and wagons were stored overnight. The shaded area of the map represents the floor just above the basement. Once Zupar melees with a PC in this area, he touches the floor, causing a 10' × 10' area under the PC to turn into water. The PC falls through to the basement below suffering 1d6 hp damage (PCs with their hands full get no save, those with one hand full can make a Dexterity check with a –5 penalty; those with nothing in their hands can make a Dexterity check with no penalty to catch the side. Making a saving throw is not necessarily a good thing as Zupar walks over to the PC and uses the *burning hands* feature of the wand to make the PC let go and suffer falling damage anyway.

Hidden in the rafters above this area is Jenko, who hovers invisibly. If a PC gets close to any hole created by Zupar, she flies onto the PC's back, knocking him down the hole. A PC can avoid this by not being surprised (–3 penalty to surprise roll), making a Strength and Dexterity check, and giving up his action for the round. If no one is close to a hole, Jenko waits until she spots a spellcaster, then dives to rip him up with her claws.

4. Basement. This dark place is bare of any furnishings. Previously it was used to store precious commodities. DM Creature #4 is down here to leap on any PC victimized by Zupar's transmutation of the stone floor above into water. If this has not occurred in three rounds, it goes up the stairs on the fourth round to help its comrades.

5. Warehouseman Break Area. Four stools and a table mark where warehousemen took a break or had lunch. There are pegs on the wall for hanging coats and hats. Nearby is a privy. Brokus hides in the break area until the PCs enter the warehouse, and then he slowly emerges to attack with his big, bony fists.

6. Manager's Office. A nice desk and chair are the only furnishings in this office. A loose stone in the floor under the desk hides the Night Parade squad's working capital: seven gems (values 3,000 × 2, 1,000 × 4, 700 × 1) and a sack containing 330 pp and 52 gp.

7. Storage stalls. Each of these stalls once held goods sorted by destination, merchant, or type. Most of them are just dusty and contain nothing more than a broken box or crate. One (DM's choice) has an unusually large pile (2′ high) of small rat bones — the remains of snacks for hungry Night Parade creatures.

The middle stall on the southwestern side of the building has a ladder that goes up to the roof. A hinged 10′ × 10′ panel can open up, and when it is opened, it is through this hole that lightning bolts are called down upon the *gate* of the Night Parade. This artifact stands 10′ tall and 5′ wide, and is constructed of many colored metal rods and balls. Glowing, sizzling snake-like tendrils of electricity slither all over the device. Unusual runes cover most of the rods and balls, and it is unlikely that a PC will have the time to try to read them. Every time a lightning bolt hits the artifact, more writing appears. When all runes are revealed, the gate device is fully active.

If a storm is in progress, Lord Tempos is on top of the warehouse roof, totally entranced with keeping the storm going. Only an attack against him personally or a shriek from Evpoter brings him out of his reverie. Once his concentration is disturbed, the storm abates in three turns.

Evpoter is standing by the *gate* calling lightning down. She can do this once every fourth round. A PC within 10′ of the *gate* when a lightning bolt hits it suffers 5d6 hp damage (save vs. spell for half damage). A PC who touches the device takes 3d6 hp damage (save vs. spell for half damage). If the Night Parade is successful in getting the *gate* open, read the following:

> Suddenly there is a bright flash and the metallic rods and balls of this strange device glow a bright green. Popping into view is yet another one of these creatures.

This monster should be another Night Parade creature created by the DM. Every third round, a new creature *gates* in, and the PCs had better get the gate shut very quickly. Shutting or turning off the gate requires a *wish* or *alter reality* spell, or damaging it with a weapon of at least +2 enchantment (the artifact is AC −7). Nothing else closes the *gate*. A successful hit blasts the attacking weapon to smithereens (1d6+2 hp damage to owner) and permanently damages the artifact, causing the amassed energy inside it to build up and explode in 2d12 rounds. The buildup should be described as a gradually increasing humming noise as the artifact begins to rock and glow a fiery red, and the snaky tendrils of electric power race around the balls and rods faster and faster. When it explodes, it causes 40d10 hp damage to anyone or anything left in the warehouse. The warehouse itself is blown to pieces, and everyone within 50′ outside suffers 2d10 hp damage (save vs. breath weapon for half damage).

Concluding the Adventure

Successfully completing the adventure should merit a story award of 50,000 XP to be divided among the surviving PCs, plus any additional bonuses the DM wishes to award for good role-playing and clever combat tactics. Taking care of the Night Parade's plot is gratefully rewarded by Lord Myrmeen Lhal. She delivers on her promise to issue a Cormyrean charter to the heroes, and King Azoun IV himself invites them to Suzail, where he bestows upon them a medal cast in honor of their achievement. If high-level PCs have not claimed a manor for themselves to build a keep due to lack of title or property, he deeds them a 25 square mile tract of land on which to start their manor. He also gives them 1,000 gp each.

Lord Lhal attends the ceremony and gives them title to all of the magical items that they recovered from Epicot's tower. (She has contacted his heirs and bought the items from the estate for the PCs, or the DM can postulate that there were no heirs and the property belongs to the government.) She retrieves any of Myschanta's belongings from the PCs since word has been received that Myschanta is alive and recovering well in Silverymoon.

Finally, the Society of Stalwart Adventurers in Suzail, an exclusive adventuring club, extends membership to those PCs who want to join. Such a place is always brimming with adventurers of repute who may need a hardy band to help them out.

Pontifel, the Zhentarim wizard, shows up at the Cormyrean celebration if the PCs collaborated with him. He delivers a written guarantee that the Black Network will not bother Arabel for 10 years, as Lord Cyric is glad to have discovered these otherworldly beings known as the Night Parade. Pontifel sweetly suggests that perhaps King Azoun and the Zhentarim might become allies to destroy this common menace, just as they allied during the crusade against the Tuigan Horde. King Azoun icily refuses the offer, and the Zhentarim wizard *teleports* back to the Citadel of the Raven in a huff.

Cormyr is a land full of potential for further adventures. If the PCs establish a keep, there will doubtless be raids from the Stonelands or other bordering areas to keep them busy. If Zhentarim help was refused, the DM could have Myrmeen enlist the PCs' help against any further plots that the Black Network instigates.

The most likely follow-up adventure involves the Night Parade. Sooner or later they will send more agents into Arabel to find out what happened to their elite squad. Maybe they will try again to take Arabel. If so, it is a solid bet that they will want the meddling adventurers who stymied their first attempt out of their way... and they *will* come looking. Ω

TO SAVE A FOREST

BY DOVJOSEF ANDERSON

Only *you* can prevent forest curses!

Artwork by Tony DiTerlizzi
Cartography by Diesel

Dovjosef writes: "By the time 'To Save a Forest' sees print, I will be attending my fourth year at Occidental College in southern California. I am double majoring in Film Studies and Economics, in order of interest. Experimenting in the film medium has become my first love. Aside from role-playing, working on a film or video project is the only activity that I can perform for more than twelve hours straight and still find myself wanting to continue. After grad school, I will pursue my career as an independent filmmaker for as long as it is financially viable."

"To Save a Forest" is an AD&D® adventure best suited to challenge a party of 4–6 good- and neutral-aligned characters of levels 4–6 (24 or more total levels). A druid or a cleric of good faith is very helpful but not essential for the completion of the quest. Based on the nature of the encounters, it is recommended that the PCs be fitted with a couple of sturdy warriors and a wizard. This module can be easily adapted to any existing campaign.

The PCs should be in no extreme hurry, traveling on horseback along the edge of a remote forest several days from the nearest settlement. The adventure background describes a conflict between the two opposing priesthoods of Tyr and Cyric, deities found in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting, though any two deities of the appropriate nature can be used.

Beginning the Adventure

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> For the past few days, you have been traveling east along a small trade route just south of the Emory Wood. You expect to reach Norrin, the largest trade center in the region, in less than a week. So far the journey has been uneventful, and it is now mid-afternoon on your fourth day of travel. The road bends to the north, and you find yourself traveling closer to the border of the forest.
>
> Almost instantly, the soft breeze from the south which has been blessing you with the sweet smell of spring flowers dies down, leaving the air still and silent. To the north, you notice a patch of black clouds casting its shadow over the heart of the calm and quiet forest.

The PCs have just entered the outer bounds of the cursed area that is the Emory Wood. Any character with the weather sense proficiency notices that the clouds seem to hang much lower than normal. A successful proficiency check reveals that the clouds are not moving. Inform any druid, ranger, or character with animal lore proficiency that the forest is abnormally silent. Whether they decide to move farther along the road or head to the forest, all of the PCs begin to notice something strange about the area. Whatever they decide to do, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Suddenly, the shriek of a high-flying bird rings out from the sky above. Looking up, you catch sight of what is most likely a falcon, flying in a wide circle over the edge of the forest. It cries out once more, as though calling out to you. As if it senses your recognition, the bird swoops down and begins to head toward you. Watching the bird's approach troubles you, as it is obviously fighting to remain in flight. It sways awkwardly and begins to flutter in a panicked effort to fly to the ground safely. When it is no more than a hundred feet from you, the bird loses its struggle and plummets into the tall grass below.

If the PCs choose not to investigate, the adventure is over. Otherwise, read the following:

> As you approach, you begin to hear a rustling in the knee-high grass where the falcon fell. Moments later you hear a faint moan — definitely not a noise that would come from a bird. With a few more steps, you see a figure lying on the ground. Where the bird should have been, now there lies a beautiful, young half-elf woman. She wears brown leathers and a wood-green cloak. Her dark hair stands in contrast to her sickly face, pale and moist with perspiration. Her red-rimmed eyes open slowly.

The woman lying in the grass is Evelyn, a druid who lives in the western reaches of the Emory Wood. She has come to seek the PCs' help in ridding her forest of its curse.

Evelyn: AL N; AC 8; MV 12 (6); D7; hp 28 (15); THAC0 16; # AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12 (9), D 13, C 14 (7), I 12, W 16, Ch 17; ML 12; staff, leather armor, sling, *ring of spell storing.* The ring still contains the spell *divination* (*remove curse, call woodland beings,* and *reflecting pool* have already been cast).

The numbers in parentheses represent Evelyn's current condition. She is no longer able to assume the forms of animals or pray for new spells. She has already cast many of her spells. Those currently remaining are: *bless, cure light wounds* (×2), *barkskin, charm person or mammal,* and *know alignment.* Attempts to heal her (*cure light wounds, cure disease,* etc.) cannot improve her condition, much to the surprise of any character who tries to help. For Evelyn, time is running out, and she hastily explains the following between long, troubled breaths and painful coughs:

> "My forest and I are in great need. Our home has been plagued by an evil curse that threatens all of our lives. The plants have begun to wither and the bark is peeling from the trees. Most of the animals have left, and those that remain are sick and dying. You can help us... you *must* help us. I beg you, for you are our last hope."

If the party is willing to help, Evelyn asks them to accompany her into the woods to see the effects of what has happened. There, she intends to explain everything and answer any questions the party may have. If the PCs agree to help and do as she asks, it proves to her that they are truly concerned, and she places great trust in them. If the PCs ask too many questions or request some type of reward, she stresses that there is no time to waste and that all will be explained shortly. If they insist that she tell them everything now, she does so, but hastily. (See the Adventure Background for details.) If the PCs bring up the subject of a reward, Evelyn says that she has little to offer them in the way of material goods, but that she shall be forever indebted to them. The PCs should show a genuine concern for the druid and her plight. To ask for a reward is truly a sign of poor character.

Adventure Background

Ever since it was built three years ago, the temple of Tyr has brought much-needed justice to the trade town of Norrin and its surrounding settlements. The priests of Tyr have dutifully carried out their roles as the keepers of peace and justice, and they have successfully eliminated the threat of many raiding creatures from the east, leaving the trade routes safe and secure.

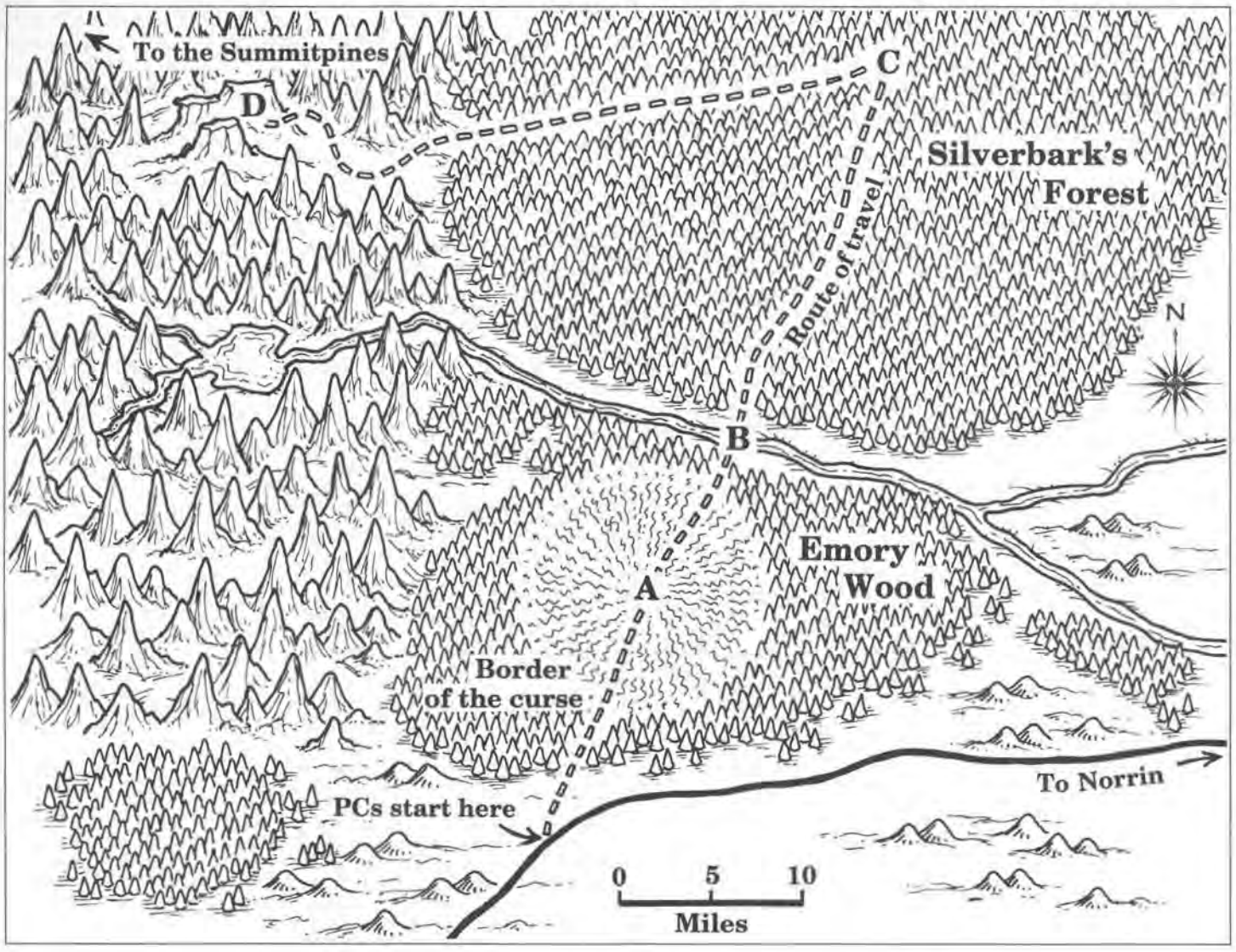
For Eulaos, a powerful worshiper of the evil god Cyric, the temple served as the only institution that would prevent him from establishing a reign of terror in the region. Weeks ago, he began to plan his attack on the temple, expecting to rid the area of Tyr's followers. He would march his dark army of priests and walking dead to the temple and murder all those found within. Then he would defile its grounds with a curse so unholy that Tyr himself would shudder.

Aiding Eulaos in his malicious plot was Slithisk, a power-hungry dark naga. An unlikely ally indeed, Slithisk offered his services to Eulaos only after discovering that the dark priest had recently become the owner of a magical *medallion of insight* (identical in function to a *gem of insight* from the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*), which Slithisk had been trying to find for months. Slithisk convinced Eulaos that his services as an advisor and wizard would prove beneficial. For the cunning naga, it would only be a matter of time before he would find an opportunity to gain possession of the most valuable medallion.

Eulaos's evil scheming did not go unseen by the gods. The priests of Tyr had been warned through several omens to be ready for an assault. They were well prepared when Eulaos led his attack on the temple. His forces were mercilessly cut down to one-fourth their original number before they reached the temple doors. Their morale shattered by the holy wrath of Tyr, Eulaos and his followers fled in panic. The vengeful priests of Tyr pursued their attackers, exacting justice on the straggling remains of Eulaos's army. Several days east of Norrin, Eulaos, Slithisk, and the last four members of his priesthood escaped the hounding priests of Tyr by taking shelter in the Emory Wood.

Slithisk suggested that the priests seek refuge in the mountains northwest of the forest, secretly hoping that they might fall victim to the many dangers that would be found there. Then, Slithisk could confront directly the weakened Eulaos. Eulaos thought it wise to avoid the trade roads, so he agreed to travel through the forest.

Thanks to her animal friends, Evelyn learned of the trespassers shortly after



their arrival. She followed them for some time, assuming the form of a squirrel to remain unnoticed. On the third evening of their exhausting march, Eulaos and the others rested in a secluded grove of oak trees that, unknown to them, belonged to the Emory Wood's eldest inhabitants: the treants. Deducing the evil nature of the priests and their serpentine companion, the treants revealed their presence to the unwanted guests, demanding that they leave at once. However, the frustrated Eulaos was not about to run a third time, so he ordered his band to prepare for yet another battle. Evelyn presented herself in her true form, urging both sides to hold back their hostilities, but neither would yield.

Foreseeing yet another defeat, Slithisk decided to abandon his companions. The naga escaped relatively unharmed. The priests were no match for the treants, and they were soon overwhelmed. Out of anger and desperation, the bitter Eulaos drew forth the scroll containing the evil curse he had intended to bestow upon the temple in Norrin. With bitter deliverance, Eulaos unleashed the curse of Cyric upon the heart of the Emory Wood. With a flash of lightning and a crack of thunder, the curse was sealed. Seconds after the last of the vile words rolled off his tongue, Eulaos and the last of his dark order had fallen.

With their soil poisoned by the blood of the evil priests, the treants ventured off to the nearest meadow to rest for the night, leaving the bodies of the priests behind. That night, their dreams were filled with horrible nightmares. They awoke disturbed and afraid. It was then that they realized a great evil had been done to them. A dark cloud had gathered overhead, blocking out the light of the sun. Returning to their glade, the treants saw that the bodies of the priests were missing. The plants within the glade and the surrounding forest had withered and their colors had faded. None of the animals that fled the battle had returned and not a single bird could be heard. All was silent.

The treants themselves began to feel weak. As the day grew on, their condi-

tion worsened. Soon, they were losing their leaves, their bark began to peel, and they felt pain with every movement. Evelyn herself felt sick, weak, and tired. Though well practiced in the arts of healing and herbalism, she could do nothing to aid the treants or herself. Using the magical ring given to her as a gift by the high druid of her region, Evelyn cast *remove curse* to no avail.

The next day the lifelessness of the glade seemed to expand. Nothing Evelyn or the treants could do would stop their affliction. Between them all, they found only one solution: they would have to awaken the great treant Silverbark. Since long before any of the treants could remember (a long, long time), Silverbark served the Emory Wood in times of great need. Though he sleeps perpetually and doesn't like to be bothered, Silverbark has faithfully provided his services to the treants in the past. If anyone could help rid them of their curse, it would be Silverbark.

Evelyn and the treants were in no condition to make the journey to Silverbark's glade. They needed someone else to make the journey for them. Evelyn cast *call woodland beings* in hopes of receiving aid from the centaurs from the east, but they never arrived. When no help came, Evelyn went to a nearby spring, where she cast a *reflecting pool* spell (from her ring) in order to scry upon the surrounding areas for anyone who could help. Luckily, she located the PCs, who were traveling on the trade route to the south. Needing to reach them as soon as possible, Evelyn assumed the form of a falcon. The transformation was painful, and she nearly fell unconscious. It was only through sheer determination that she was able to reach the PCs.

The Curse

The scroll used by Eulaos was created years ago by one of Cyric's most powerful priests in a ritual so evil that it destroyed its creator. Recently, Eulaos raided the dark worshiper's private temple. In addition to recovering the scroll, Eulaos found the *medallion of insight* that Slithisk so desperately desires.

Having been prepared by a priest much more powerful than Eulaos, the scroll was too difficult for him to understand. He failed to cast its contents properly. As a result, the curse has also taken its toll upon the caster and the other dark priests, dooming them to a horrible fate. In the hours after their deaths, Eulaos and his followers were slowly shifted to the Negative Material plane, transforming them into undead. The bodies of the four lesser priests were consumed in the process, and they were left as shadows. Eulaos had a stronger link to the Negative Material Plane than did his companions. Thus, his physical body survived the transformation, and he became a wight. Even in their state of undeath, the shadowy remains of the lesser priests still follow Eulaos at his side (they are still lawful evil). Together they wander the forest, seeking to drain the life force of all they encounter.

Ordinarily the curse would have taken its full and immediate effect on the forest and its inhabitants, laying waste to all life in the area. However, as a result of Eulaos' miscast curse, it is taking effect slowly, draining the life force from everything in a five-mile radius. Anyone entering the forest after the curse was cast is unaffected by it.

Entering the Emory Wood

Evelyn leads the PCs through the woods toward the treants' grove. She must be carried or put on a horse, as she cannot travel effectively on her own. Remember to encourage the PCs to hurry. Evelyn should make it clear to them that no time can be wasted. Once the PCs enter the area affected by the curse (as illustrated on the map), they begin to notice its effects. At first, they notice that the plants have begun to wither and lose their color, that the flowers refuse to bloom, and that there are no animals in sight. The closer they come to the treants' grove, the worse things become. Shrubs and bushes are showing the last signs of life, and the bark on the trees has begun to peel away. The only sound is that of a hollow wind, sweeping dead leaves across the ground of the forest. The black clouds they saw before now block out the sun, leaving the forest dark and gloomy. Their horses grow uneasy, and extra effort must be made to urge them on.

Also, for every hour the PCs spend in the cursed area of the forest, roll on Encounter Table A. It takes the PCs three hours to reach the treants' grove. In her condition, Evelyn cannot afford to travel any faster.

A1. The Treants' Grove. As the PCs near the grove, read or paraphrase the following:

> At last Evelyn asks you to stop. Just ahead of you lies a meadow filled with tall grass swaying lifelessly in the cold breeze. In the center of the meadow lies a tightly packed grove of sick, leafless oak trees.
>
> Evelyn asks you to dismount and tie your horses to the trees at the meadow's edge. She then guides you slowly through the meadow and into the small bunch of oak trees, where she quietly asks you to be seated.
>
> Evelyn settles down by one of the trees and looks to you. At last, she smiles and looks about the grove. Gesturing toward you, she speaks as if talking to the trees; "You see? They have come to help us, as I told you they would."
>
> From above, a deep, whispery voice responds, "Yes. They have come, but will they help us?" Looking around, you notice that the trees themselves have begun to move. As if they were all turning around to face you, you can see their worried faces studying your every move: they're treants!
>
> Evelyn speaks, this time addressing you: "We are very grateful that you have come to help us. The curse that has been placed upon us is very powerful. Each day things grow worse, and soon we will all die. There is nothing we can do to save ourselves. The only one who can help us now is Silverbark, a great treant who resides in the forest to the north. All we ask is that you seek him out and tell him of our situation. Surely, he will know what — if anything — can be done."

After answering the PCs questions, Evelyn tells them of the encounter with the evil priests. No magic the PCs may have, short of a *wish,* can remedy things. If the PCs cast a *remove curse* or similar spell, inform them that the nature of the curse is like none they have ever encountered. All attempts fail. If the PCs inspect the area in which the curse was cast, allow PCs with spellcraft proficiency to make a proficiency check with a –5 penalty to the roll. Any who succeed suspect that the curse may have been miscast.

Evelyn and the treants give the PCs reliable directions to the edge of Silver-

Encounter Table A

A roll of 1–3 on 1d6 indicates an encounter. Choose or roll 1d8 to determine randomly which encounter to use. Encounters marked with an asterisk (*) cannot be used more than once. Reroll if such an encounter has already been used. If Evelyn is with the PCs during an encounter, she cannot engage in combat. She casts spells from a distance if asked to do so.

1. Dead animal: The PCs spot a small dead animal (bird, fox, raccoon, rabbit, squirrel, etc.) lying on the ground in the silent forest. It has been killed by the debilitating effects of the curse.

2. Dying animal: The PCs happen upon a sick, suffering animal (deer, badger, skunk, wolf, etc.). Sadly, little can be done to help it until the curse is dispelled. If the PCs can somehow communicate with the animal, they can learn that it is confused and in a great deal of pain. It cannot provide them with any useful knowledge.

***3. Centaurs:** The PCs spot three centaurs approaching from the west. These are the very ones Evelyn tried to summon; however, they were slain by the undead Eulaos and his minions while traveling to the grove. The curse has animated their life-drained bodies, turning them into ju-ju zombies. They now wander the forest, attacking all living things on sight. If hailed, the centaurs do not answer but head straight toward the PCs with intent to kill, shooting their bows for two rounds and then closing in for melee. Once within 10′ of the PCs, they are recognized by the PCs as undead. They fight until destroyed or turned.

Ju-ju Zombies (3): INT semi-; AL NE; AC 6; MV 18; HD 3+12; hp 31, 24, 19; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3d4 (1d6 with bows); SD +1 or better weapon needed to hit, half damage from blunt and piercing weapons, immune to mind-affecting spells, illusions, psionics, electricity, and *magic missile* spells; SZ L; ML nil; XP 975; *MM*/373. Each centaur carries a short bow, 12 arrows, and a war club. Note that the environment provided by the curse makes attempts to turn undead more difficult than normal; these ju-ju zombies turn as vampires.

***4. Brown Bear:** The PCs stumble on an anxious bear, a mother of two, who is nursing one of her young. Unfortunately, the poor cub wandered into the forest, drank from a poisoned spring (see below), and is now dying. When encountered, the mother bear rears up and roars at the PCs, viciously attacking any who come too close. Even if the PCs have some way of communicating with the mother bear, it is very difficult to convince her that they are nothing other than a threat to her cub. Without a skilled ranger or the assistance of a *charm* spell, it is best to leave her alone.

Brown Bear: INT semi-; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5+5; hp 34; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d8; SA hug on a roll of 18 or better for 2d6; SZ L; ML 18; XP 420; *MM*/17.

***5. Poisoned Stream:** The PCs hear the soft trickling of a small stream that seems awkward in the otherwise silent forest. Ahead, the stream cuts in front of the PCs' path. It appears to be filled with clear and normal water; however, the withered plants and small dead animals now lining its bank suggest otherwise. Anyone who drinks from the stream or later drinks water that has been gathered from the stream becomes very sick, losing two points of Constitution per hour for the next four hours, and suffering a –2 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks.

***6. Hangman Tree:** To their surprise, the PCs pass by a shady glen inhabited by a large oak tree that appears to be totally healthy in the midst of the cursed forest. The tree is actually a hungry hangman tree whose diet of wandering animals has become progressively smaller in the past few days. It impatiently awaits any prey who pass under its branches. Rangers and druids have a 5% chance per level of recognizing that the tree is somehow unusual. The tree appears to be entirely normal aside from its apparent health. In fact, it is the plant's magic resistance that spared it from the curse. If the PCs wander too close, it attacks. If the PCs are able to communicate with the tree (by using *speak with plants,* for example), it replies by urging them to come closer (the tree is not necessarily evil; it is simply hungry). If the party does not fall for this, the tree desperately asks them if they have seen any animals nearby. If asked whether or not it has seen anything unusual, the tree tells them that an unusually large snake wandered by the other day. Unfortunately, the tree adds, it didn't come close enough to become a meal.

Hangman Tree: INT low; AL N; AC 3; MV 0; HD 6+35; hp 59; THAC0 7; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3; MR 30%; SZ H; ML 15; XP 1,400; *MM*/293. The tree has a total of six appendages (AC 5) with 16 hp each. Anyone hit by the noose-vines is swallowed in four rounds. One Bend Bars/Lift Gates roll is allowed per successful vine attack. Anyone swallowed suffers 3d4 hp acid damage per round.

***7–8. A Visit From Eulaos:** Eulaos and his shadows are nearby and have sensed the party's presence. The PCs have considerably more life force than anything else in the forest, and the undead are particularly excited to have found such promising victims. They attempt to surround the party before making their move. This encounter is best used if given a bit of horror-flick flavor. Before the undead make their presence known, have a hollow, cold gust of wind pass by. It chills the PCs to the core, and causes any torches, lanterns, or campfires the party may have lit to flicker. Their horses become uneasy and panicked, and effort must be made to calm them.

After providing some sense of buildup and allowing the party to prepare themselves for the worst, Eulaos emerges from behind a tree. He then raises a clawed finger to signal his shadows to attack. If the PCs attempt to communicate with Eulaos, and if they are somehow able to learn of his defeat by the priests of Tyr (through divination or some other means), they may be able to talk him out of a conflict by falsely promising him immediate vengeance against his enemies (by providing him with false information, offering him a magical item that can be used to destroy the priests, etc.). At this point, he still retains enough memory of his former life to let his thirst for vengeance lead him astray. However, such action should only be used as a diversion. If the party allows Eulaos to leave the forest and wreak havoc on others, they must suffer the consequences (perhaps losing a friend or valued contact to the hands of

bark's forest, though they don't know the exact location of his grove. Evelyn informs the PCs that Silverbark is likely to be in a deep slumber. Once they find him, they must enter his grove and speak his name to wake him. The journey should take no more than three days if they ride at a steady pace.

It is now the early evening of the third day since the curse was cast. By the morning of the thirteenth day, Evelyn and the treants will be dead, and nearly all of the Emory Wood will begin suffering the effects of the curse. Make it clear that time is running out, but do not provide them with an exact time frame. Allow the PCs to speculate whether they can make it back in time even if they travel at the fastest rate possible. This provides a sense of urgency. Evelyn encourages them to leave immediately, telling them that they should near the forest's edge by nightfall.

B. The River. It takes the PCs three hours on horseback to reach the edge of the Emory Wood. Remember to roll for encounters on Table A for as long as they remain in the cursed area of the forest. When the PCs emerge from the forest, read the following:

> Before you lies a raging river, twenty yards wide. Fifty yards beyond its far bank, you see the edge of Silverbark's forest.

It is impossible simply to forge this stretch of river. Anyone entering at this point must make a save vs. paralyzation at –5 or be swept downriver (to the east). A successful swimming check must be made to stay afloat, with a –4 penalty if the PC is wearing armor. Anyone without the proficiency or who fails the roll drowns in 2d4 rounds. A wider and calmer stretch of the river one half-mile to the east can be crossed safely.

Night has begun to fall if the PCs have come straight from the treants' grove, and the open fields on either side

the undead, or by having their names as adventurers tarnished should the priests of Tyr learn of their actions).

Eulaos (wight form): INT avg; AL LE; AC 5 (2 in armor); MV 12; HD 4+3; hp 28; THAC0 15; # AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA energy drain; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 14; XP 1,400; *MM*/360; *mace +1, plate mail +1, medallion of insight.* In a scroll case on his belt are three priest scrolls. One contains *cure light wounds, cause light wounds,* and *faerie fire* at 5th-level ability. Another contains *protection from good 10' radius* at 9th-level ability, and the last is a scroll of *protection from undead.* As a wight, Eulaos does not use weapons or scrolls.

In his undeath, Eulaos appears to be a tall man with scraggly black hair, tight gray flesh, and cruel burning eyes. He is clad in plate mail draped with the torn black vestments of a dark priest. His *medallion* shines brightly, hanging at the center of his chest. The *medallion* is a gold circle, studded with diamonds and is worth 5,000 gp.

Shadows (4): INT low; AL LE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 18, 17, 14, 11; THAC0 17; # AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1; SA strength drain; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 13; XP 420; *MM*/312.

Eulaos and his minions fight until destroyed. Because of the empowering negative environment of the curse, Eulaos is turned as a ghost, and the shadows are turned as spectres; however, any priest using the holy symbol of Tyr may add +3 to his roll to turn this particular group of undead.

Slithisk, after fleeing the battle with the treants, found a place to hide in hopes of returning the following night to recover his precious *medallion of insight.* His cowardice spared him the fate of suffering the effects of the curse. Upon returning to the grove Slithisk caught sight of the undead remains of Eulaos. Sure enough, he still wore the magical *medallion.* Though anxious to possess the *medallion,* Slithisk knew that he alone would not be powerful enough to survive a conflict with the undead. Slithisk decided to follow them from a distance, waiting for the right opportunity to claim his prize, and is now nearby during the party's encounter with Eulaos. He patiently awaits the outcome of the battle before taking action. If the PCs destroy Eulaos but leave the *amulet* behind, Slithisk retrieves the item and leaves the area, never to be seen again. If the PCs take the *amulet,* Slithisk follows them, using his *ESP* ability to learn of their intentions. Once he has done so, Slithisk decides to stay behind and begin preparations to ambush the party upon their return to the Emory Wood.

Encounter Table B

A roll of 1 on 1d6 indicates an encounter. Choose or roll 1d8 to determine which encounter to use:

1. Puma. Each PC has a 10% chance of noticing a puma watching them from the foliage. The puma feels threatened by the party entering its territory, and it attacks if approached. If communicated with, the puma demands that the party travel around its territory (this would require an extra hour or so of travel). If the PCs can somehow befriend the puma, it follows them unseen. It only comes out to warn the party of any possible dangers it may be keen enough to sense. If this is the case, subtract 1 from any surprise rolls made against the PCs.

Puma: INT semi-; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 3+2; hp 16; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/ 1d6; SA rear claws, 1–4 each; SD surprised on a 1; SZ M; ML 9; XP 270; *MM*/36.

2. Giant Wasps. The party nears a hive belonging to a small community of giant wasps. Each PC has a 2-in-6 chance of hearing the buzzing sounds of the wasps guarding their lair before the party comes too close. The wasps are hostile by nature and attack the PCs on sight if they fail to travel around the area. If the PCs run away, the wasps do not pursue them. There are currently six wasps in the area.

The wasps nest lies at the base of a nearby tree. A burrowed hole large enough for a human to crawl through leads underground, opening up into a low-ceilinged room approximately 15′ in diameter. An old pair of *boots of elvenkind* and 36 gp have been shoved into the far corner of the room. These are the belongings of a long-dead elf who unknowingly disturbed the wasps during his travels. Five other wasps return to the area approximately half an hour after the initial encounter takes place.

Giant Wasps (6): INT animal; AL N; AC 4; MV 6, Fl 21 (B); HD 4; hp 10, 11, 13, 15, 18, 20; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2–d4/1d4; SZ M; ML 9; XP 420; *MM*/36.

3. Rattlesnake. Passing through a small clearing, the lead PC's horse is startled by the sudden sound of a rattlesnake. It is right in front of the horse, having nearly been stepped on. The riding PC must make a land riding check or be thrown from the saddle for 1d6 hp damage. The frightened snake strikes at any who come close.

Poisonous Snake: INT animal; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 7; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison, save vs. poison or become incapacitated for 14 days; SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; *MM*/320.

4. Stirge Nest. If it is encountered in the day time, the PCs have a 50% chance of passing under the stirge nest unnoticed. Otherwise, the stirges wake up and attack the PCs in 1d3 rounds. If it is encountered at night, the party is attacked by a hunting flock of five stirges (the others have had their fill of blood on the nearby animals and have headed home).

Stirges (10): INT animal; AC 8; MV 3, flight 18; HD 1+1; hp 5 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA blood drain; SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; *MM*/332. After a successful strike, a stirge drains 1d4 hp damage in blood until it has drained a total of 12 hp.

5. Beetles. Up ahead, the party notices three large beetles feeding on a fallen deer. If disturbed, the beetles take a defensive stance and prepare to shoot their acid clouds at anyone who threatens them. If left alone, they return to their meal.

Bombardier Beetles (3): INT non-; AL N; AC 4; MV 9; HD 2+2; hp 16, 11, 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2–12; SA acid cloud; SZ S; ML 13; XP 120; *MM*/18. There is a 50% chance each round that a beetle shoots its acid cloud in combat. The cloud inflicts 3d4 hp damage to anyone in its 8′ sphere. The sound caused by the release of the cloud has a 20% chance of stunning anyone in a 15-foot radius. Victims are stunned for 2d4 rounds and deafened for an additional 2d4 rounds. Those not stunned are still deaf for 2d6 rounds. The cloud can be released twice, once every third round.

6. Unicorn. The PCs catch sight of an elegant unicorn standing alone. He disappears into the forest moments later. The unicorn, Derva, lives in the forest with his daughter, Nina. His mate, Uma, is currently away, helping a family of sprites in a nearby forest to defend their home against invading giants. Derva allows himself to be seen in order to let the PCs know that he is keeping a watchful eye on them during their visit to the forest. If they attempt to speak with him (Derva speaks elven), he listens while remaining out of view.

If the PCs ask him for help in contacting Silverbark, he becomes concerned with why they seek the mighty treant. He shows himself again, firmly inquiring why they have come to find him. At this point he recognizes his friend Fray and agrees to speak openly with the party. He can provide the party with advice, warning them that Silverbark won't take kindly to outsiders. Derva instructs them to wear mistletoe around their necks (which can be gathered in a nearby glen), a sign to other unicorns and sylvan creatures that Derva and Uma have granted the party safe passage through the forest. This, Derva hopes, will quell Silverbark's likely animosity and distrust of the PCs. Derva politely declines if the PCs ask him to accompany them on their quest to see the treant, as he must tend to young Nina.

Derva (unicorn): INT avg; AL CG; AC 2; MV 24; HD 4+4; hp 23; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d12; SA charge for 3d12; SD immune to poison and charm and hold spells; SZ L; ML 14; XP 650; *MM*/353; can *teleport* up to 360 yards away once a day.

7. Dryad. Rayna, a young dryad, has spotted the party from a distance. If the PCs appear to be a threat to the forest, Rayna immediately seeks help from her friend Derva the unicorn. If the PCs include any male characters with a Charisma of 16 or higher, Rayna attempts to *charm* the most charismatic of them into becoming her slave. She calls out to the PCs, waving from behind a tree up ahead. Once she has their attention, Rayna blows a kiss to her chosen victim. The PCs must make a save vs. spell with a –3 penalty to resist the beautiful dryad's advances. Fray is able to communicate with Rayna and has a 60% chance of convincing her to release a *charmed* person, telling her that he is on a quest of a very important nature. Otherwise, Rayna decides that the quest can be completed without her newfound lover. Note that If the PCs are wearing the mistletoe as advised by Derva (see above), Rayna leaves them alone.

Rayna (dryad): INT high; AL N; AC

of the river make nice campsites. The PCs are likely to be in need of rest at this point, although they can push on if they wish.

Once on the other side of the river, the PCs discover that Silverbark's forest is both vast and dense, filled with all sorts of healthy trees, bushes, and wild flowers that stand in contrast to the woods from which they came. Once inside the dense forest, the PCs realize that their rate of travel has slowed.

With only the vaguest directions from Evelyn, there is little hope of the PCs finding Silverbark on their own. Any character seeking guidance from the animals or plants of the forest via an *animal friendship* or similar spell finds the natives unusually guarded about giving away the location to Silverbark's grove; however, if befriended, they agree to guide the PCs to the edge of the grove as long as they feel comfortable and unthreatened by them.

A Feathered Friend

Whether or not the PCs are able to find help from the animals, they soon encounter Fray, a talking owl who has made the forest his home. Fray is a very old and wise owl, having served as advisor to a great many heroes on dangerous quests. Years ago, Fray retired from his days as a guide when one of his wings was irreparably injured in a confrontation with a peryton. Since then, Fray has lived alone in the comfort of the forest.

He is alerted to the presence of the PCs 4d6 rounds after they enter the forest. Fray is curious to learn the nature of the party's visit, as it is only on rare occasions that he has seen humans or demihumans in the forest. Upon spying them, he uses his ability to *detect good*. If he does sense that the party consists mostly of good characters, Fray takes cover in a large tree and speaks to them. The PCs cannot see the owl at this point, and may even think that they have found Silverbark. Read the following:

> Suddenly, from up ahead, a voice calls out to you. "Ho there!" Its voice seems to be coming from a large oak tree. "Why have you come here?"

Fray wants to know who the PCs are and what they are doing in the forest. With his superior wisdom, Fray can determine if the PCs are lying. If he learns or is able to discern the nature of their quest, he shows himself and offers to lead them to Silverbark's grove. If the PCs agree, Fray flutters down and perches himself on the head of the lead PC's horse. The PCs notice that the owl has difficulty in flight. Fray introduces himself and begins to guide them through the forest. Along the way he tries to learn as much as he can about the PCs' quest.

Fray (talking owl): INT exceptional; AL LG; AC 3; MV 1, fly 6 (E); HD 2+2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d2; SD never surprised, immune to *cause fear, charm person, command, fear, forget, friends, hold person, hypnotism, ray of enfeeblement* and *scare*; MR 20%; SZ S; ML 15; XP 975; *MM*/27; can *detect good* at will.

Fray appreciates any offers made by those willing to cure his injury, but graciously refuses to accept, as his lameness is beyond repair.

For the next two and a half days of travel through Silverbark's forest, roll on Encounter Table B to determine if the PCs run into anything of interest during their visit to Silverbark's forest. Rolls should be made once every morning, evening, and night.

C. The Grove of the Sleeping Tree. As the PCs near the grove on the eve of their third day of travel, Fray warns them:

> "Be careful, brave souls. To wake a sleeping tree is not without danger. Silverbark is likely to take offense at your intrusion, and you must be very careful not to incur his wrath. Convince him that you are truly in need of his help, or your journey will have been of no worth."

As the PCs approach the grove, read the following:

> Before you is a ring of two dozen oak trees that stand apart from the rest of the surrounding forest. They are much taller, and their wide trunks stand straighter then the other trees. In the center of the large ring of oaks stands the largest and most majestic tree you have ever seen. The bark of its ten-foot-wide trunk gleams as if it were made of silver. Its strong branches, full of shimmering leaves, reach nearly a hundred feet into the air. The massive tree seems to shade the entire grove all by itself. Dozens of birds sing merrily from their nests. A doe sips from a small bubbling spring nearby. The deer looks up at you momentarily, then returns to its business without showing the least bit of concern.

The grove is warded with an enchantment similar to a *forbiddance* spell. Any non-native being with an alignment other than good attempting to enter the grove must make a saving throw vs. paralyzation. Neutrally aligned beings who fail their save are simply forced back and cannot enter the area until the enchantment is dispelled (treat as though cast from a 16th-level priest). Druids are exempt from this effect. Evil beings who fail their save

9; MV 12; HD 2; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA charm, *dimension door* back to her grove by stepping into any tree; MR 50%; SZ M; ML 12; XP 975; MM/93. Anyone *charmed* and taken away by Rayna has a 50% chance of escaping after 1d4 days of captivity. Otherwise, he is never seen or heard from again.

8. Grigs. Jixie and Prite are a pair of adventurous and mischievous grigs that live in the forest. They are seldom found here but are currently on vacation from their many travels. When they spot the PCs, Jixie and Prite attempt to pull some sort of prank on them (scare their horses, knock down their tents, lead them astray, etc.). Afterward, the grigs apologize to the PCs and thank them for the laugh. If the PCs tell the grigs about their dilemma, Jixie and Prite become truly concerned and offer to help out. If the party welcomes them, the grigs are loyal and happy to be of assistance. If not, they follow the party unseen, playing tricks on them every now and then, though they are still genuinely interested in helping out. If the PCs are ever in danger, Jixie and Prite come to their aid.

Grigs (2): INT avg; AL N(G); AC 2; MV 6, leap 12; HD 1/2+1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 3 (darts) or 2 (swords); Dmg by weapon type; SZ T; ML 12; XP 270; *MM*/328; sprite sword, six darts. Once per round, the grigs can use the following abilities at 6th level ability: *change self, entangle, invisibility, pyrotechnics, trip,* and *ventriloquism.*

suffer 3d6 hp damage in addition to being forced back.

Once inside the grove, good characters feel safe and protected. Neutral characters (except for druids) feel uneasy, and evil characters feel threatened and unwanted. If one of the PCs calls out Silverbark's name while within the grove, read the following:

> At first, nothing seems to happen. Shortly thereafter, you notice that the birds stop their singing. The doe looks up to you again, this time perking up its ears. With a final glance at the tree, it springs away, disappearing into the forest. The leaves of the great tree begin to sway even more, creating a loud rustling sound. The ground beneath your feet seems to rumble, and the birds fly out from their cover within the leaves. There is a moment of silence, then suddenly, the grove itself seems to come alive. Grass, weeds, bushes and trees lash out at your party, wrapping, twisting, and entwining themselves around you.

Silverbark has just been awakened from a 150-year slumber, and he is not pleased with the mortal beings that have disturbed him. He has used his ability to cast an *entangle* spell to trap the intruders. Any who save vs. spell can move at 10' per round, enabling them to escape to the grove's edge in two rounds.

Silverbark (greater treant): INT exceptional; AL CG; AC –2; MV 9; HD 16; hp 91; THAC0 5; #AT 2; Dmg 6d6/6d6; SA animate trees; MR 30%; SZ G; ML 18; for other abilities, see the monster description at the end of the module.

After the players have rolled their saving throws, read the following:

> The great tree in the center of the grove shifts in the ground, again causing the earth to shake at your feet. In the center of the trunk, you can make out what seems to be a face glaring at you from beneath a wrinkled brow. The face resembles that of an old man with a long beard, bushy eyebrows, and deep eyes. In a stern, thunderous voice it speaks to you: "Foolish mortals! How dare you disturb me?"

If the PCs are wearing mistletoe around their necks as instructed by Derva, Silverbark quells his anger and listens to what the PCs have to say. Proceed to "Talking to Silverbark." If not, Silverbark uses his ability to *know alignment* on whoever is first to reply. If the person is of good or neutral alignment, he demands that they leave at once (if the person is of an evil alignment, Silverbark attacks him and anyone who comes to his aid). Note that Fray remains silent, observing from a distance. He feels that it is best to let the PCs confront the treant on their own. If the PCs plead with Silverbark or ask him to hear them out, he shouts:

> "Silence!" You are so stunned by the treant's deafening roar that you are shocked into compliance. The mighty Silverbark glares at you with piercing eyes as his powerful voice echoes in the distance, and you can sense a great anger burning inside him. Again he speaks in his commanding tone. "Why have you come here, intruders?"

Talking to Silverbark

The characters should have a hard time convincing Silverbark that they are worth his concern, and the DM should role-play the treant as if he were very annoyed. Silverbark pays closer attention to what the PCs have to say once they mention the curse on the Emory Wood. He grows increasingly impatient if they take too long to explain the reason for their visit. Once the PCs are finished explaining, he casts *reflecting pool* in the nearby spring to reach his own conclusions. The PCs may look into the *pool* if they wish, where they see cloudy images of Evelyn and the treants resting in the forest, even worse off than they were before. After a few moments, Silverbark politely asks the PCs to wait outside the grove while he considers his actions. Many long and silent minutes pass before Silverbark calls for them. When they return, he speaks more patiently with them.

> "It has been a long time since I have seen such a powerful work of evil. Somehow, I feel that those affected have been lucky to live. I appreciate your concern for their well-being. Unfortunately, little can be done to save them, and I am without the time or the means to do so. I am afraid you have come too late." You can see a look of grief wash over the powerful face before you.
> "They must be comforted in their final days, and it is best for you to return to them quickly."

Even the great Silverbark is without an answer. He can do nothing to save the inhabitants of the Emory Wood in time. If the PCs refuse to accept his grim predictions or insist that something be done to save the forest, Silverbark explains:

> "The intense presence of evil summoned by the curse makes it very difficult to dispel. You must cleanse the area of evil before any attempt to remove the curse can hope to succeed. First, and most important, the forest must be showered with a heavy rain. The next wind to carry a rain is far away, however, and there is no time to wait. The only alternative is to have the rain summoned."
>
> Silverbark pauses for a moment, taking time to carefully study your party. He continues, "Unfortunately, to summon a rain, one must acquire a rare material component that lies far beyond our reach. Therefore, I do not see how anything can be done."

If the PCs inquire about the material component, Silverbark tells them that to summon a rain, one must plant the seed of a summitpine during a full moon. The moon will be at its fullest in four days: two days before Evelyn and the treants are to die. However, the rare summitpine is only found atop the highest of mountains, and it would take weeks to find such a tree and return with a seed.

Silverbark informs the PCs that he will take steps to have the curse removed, but that he has no hope of doing so in time to save Evelyn and the treants. He thanks the PCs again before urging them to return to the Emory Wood to comfort the dying.

At last, Fray offers a suggestion to Silverbark and the PCs. Fray knows of a herd of pegasi that inhabit the mountains to the east. If the PCs can somehow convince the pegasi to help, then they could make the journey to the summitpines in no time. Fray has dealt with the herd in the past, and he assures the characters that the flying horses are likely to be of assistance. Silverbark gratefully sanctions Fray's suggestion and is willing to trust the PCs if they haven't proven themselves to be incompetent.

If the PCs need new mounts, Silverbark summons a herd of wild horses who can serve as temporary steeds. Note that these horses refuse to

Encounter Table C

A roll of 1–3 on 1d6 indicates an encounter. Choose or roll 1d6 to determine which encounter to use.

1. Drek Ornelleth. Drek, a drow, was wrongly accused of the recent murder of a powerful drow lord. Fearing for his life, he fled his home in the Underdark. It wasn't long before he encountered a small derro raiding party. He was able to evade them only temporarily. Drek fled to the surface world in hopes that they would end their pursuit. Having underestimated their hatred toward his kind, Drek still flees.

If the PCs encounter Drek, there is a 2-in-6 chance that he has spotted them and is currently trying to hide. He tries to remain unnoticed as the party passes. Otherwise, Drek pays more attention to what is behind him, and the party sees him coming.

If discovered, Drek is much more interested in flight than in fighting his way through the party. Recognizing that he is outnumbered, Drek makes no hostile actions toward the PCs unless forced into a fight. Drek remains silent, waiting to see how the party responds.

If spoken to, Drek replies in very poor common, informing the party that he means them no harm. If he senses that the party is not overly hostile, he warns them that a vicious band of derro have followed him to the surface and are bound to be nearby.

If the PCs let him go, he is never seen again. If they offer to help him, he thanks them hesitantly. He agrees to join the party for the time being, even offering to scout ahead. Then, at first opportunity, Drek slips away from the party and continues his descent from the mountains. If captured, Drek patiently waits for the right moment to make his escape. He does not assist the party in a confrontation with the derro, instead taking the advantage of a chaotic situation to flee.

There is a 20% chance that 3d6 rounds after this encounter, three death dogs arrive and attack everyone in sight. These are the same death dogs listed below and do not arrive if previously encountered.

Drek Ornelleth (drow): AL CE; AC 3; MV 12; F5/T6; hp 27; THAC0 16; #AT 2/1; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, D 16, C 11, I 13, W 12, Ch 12; PP 10, OL 10, F/RT 25, MS 65, HS 75, DN 25, CW 50, RL 20; SD +2 save vs. magic; MR 62%; ML 1; *short sword +2* (adamantite), *dagger +2* (adamantite), elven chain, short bow, 12 arrows. Being a drow, Drek can cast the following spells once per day: *dancing lights, detect magic, faerie fire, darkness, levitate,* and *know alignment.*

2. Derro Hunting Party. This cruel band of derro was sent off from a larger underground raiding party to pursue a despicable drow (a spy no doubt) who was lucky enough to avoid capture. They see the opportunity as a marvelous hunting trip, and as far as they're concerned, everything is game. Once spotted, the derro take a moment to assess the PCs' strength. If the PCs appear to be weaker than the derro (for example, if there are few identifiable fighters, or if many of the PCs are already wounded), the derro attack, capturing any survivors who are then slowly tortured to death for their enjoyment. If an attempt to parley is made by the PCs, the derro can be talked out of a confrontation if told where to find Drek. The derro are eager to find their prey, and are easily misdirected if the PCs choose to lie about Drek's direction of travel. Even if the PCs haven't encountered Drek, the derro describe the dark elf in conversation and ask if the PCs have seen him.

Derro elite (3): INT exceptional; AL CE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 5; hp 30, 25, 21; THAC0 15; #AT 1 (or 2 with buckler); Dmg by weapon type; MR 30%; SZ S; ML 13; XP 975; *MM*/96; military picks, heavy derro armor, bucklers, *secari* daggers.

Derro (6): AC 5; HD 3; hp 20, 18, 14, 13, 11, 4; #AT 1 (2 with crossbows); ML 12; XP 650; hook-fauchards, light derro armor, secari daggers. The three with the lowest hit points are crossbowmen who carry repeating crossbows with 12 bolts each, instead of pole arms. Other statistics as above.

3. Death Dog Pack. These evil two-headed dogs have been trained to hunt by the derro and have been sent to track down the drow. They attack if the party contains any elves (of any kind, including half-elves). Otherwise they bark viciously at the party (a sign to their masters that other prey is nearby) before continuing their pursuit of Drek. They have been specifically ordered not to kill. Instead, they viciously attack until they have subdued their prey. They then howl and wait for the masters to arrive (6d10 rounds later). The derro have trained them as such because they take pleasure in watching the slow painful deaths of their victims.

Death Dogs (3): INT semi-; AL NE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 2+1; hp 14, 13, 11; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10/1d10; SA disease; SZ M; ML 12; XP 120; *MM*/57. If bitten, victims must save vs. poison or contract a rotting disease that kills them in 4d6 days unless they receive a *cure disease* spell.

4. Gnolls. The party has been spotted by a group of gnolls on patrol of the surrounding area. These war-hungry gnolls have spent the last few months recovering from heavy losses in a battle with the Bloodclaw orc tribe. They are eager for battle and set up an ambush for the party. When the time of the encounter comes, the party is surprised on a 1–6. The first round, the gnolls roll heavy boulders down on the party from an overhang. Each PC must make a save vs. paralyzation or suffer 3–12 hp damage from a falling boulder. The gnolls then close in for melee. If the party tracks them to their lair, they find four more adult males, seven females, and four young residing within a large cavern. The gnolls have 360 gp in coins stashed in their lair.

Gnolls (6): INT avg; AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 2; hp 12, 10, 9, 7, 7, 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ L; ML 11; XP 35; *MM*/158; long swords, spears, shields, 2–12 gp each.

5. Sprained Ankle. A randomly selected character must make a Dexterity check at –2 or suffer a sprained ankle as a result of traveling over the rocky terrain. This halves his movement rate for 1d3 days. A *cure light wounds* spell negates the effect.

6. Fall. The characters are rounding a dangerous ledge. A section of the ledge is particularly weak and breaks away if stepped on. Due to the narrowness of the ledge the party must advance single-file. The first character in line weighing over 100 lbs. must make a save vs. paralyzation or fall to the rocks below, suffering 2d6 hp damage.

wear saddles, barding, or a bridle, and they are willing to take the PCs only as far the mountains.

Wild Horses: INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 24; HD 2; hp 7 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SZ L; ML 6; XP 35; *MM*/194.

Before they leave, Silverbark informs the PCs of the other steps that must be taken — in addition to summoning the rain — before they can remove the curse.

- First, all evil beings in the affected area must be removed or destroyed. Silverbark once again looks through his *reflecting pool* to show the PCs which evil beings remain in the forest. If they were not previously defeated or encountered, the PCs see Eulaos and his shadows. Slithisk can also be seen following the undead from a distance. Note that the undead centaurs, if they were never encountered, are no longer wandering the forest.
- Second, with water taken from Silverbark's spring, the PCs must give three drops to those who were most severely affected by the curse: Evelyn, the treants, and any surviving plants in their grove. The water collected from the spring is actually *sweet water.*
- Third and last, Silverbark lowers one of his branches and drops an acorn into the hands of the PCs' highest-level priest. He explains that the acorn must be planted in the very spot where the *curse* was cast and watered with the remaining water collected from his spring. This should be done just as the priest is casting *remove curse.* Only then does such a spell have a chance of succeeding. If the PCs are without a priest who is normally able to cast *remove curse,* Silverbark gives them a scroll containing the spell. If the PCs are entirely without a priest, Silverbark makes the journey to the Emory Wood himself while they recover the seed from the summitpine. He can move unhindered through the forest and arrives there soon after the PCs have taken care of the other steps. Then, he can cast *remove curse* instead.

Entering the Mountains

The journey to the mountains goes entirely without encounters. Silverbark has spread the word to every plant and animal to leave the PCs alone. The PCs even notice that the plants and trees seem to move out of the way for the PCs, making their travels through the forest much easier. This allows them to reach the edge of the forest in a single day.

A second day must be spent traveling through the mountains to reach the home of the pegasi. When the PCs reach the mountains, Fray explains that the horses are best left behind, as the terrain is soon to become treacherous. Remember, any wild horse given to them by Silverbark now returns to its home. Any horse brought into the mountains must make a save vs. paralyzation for every hour of travel or become lame from the rugged ground.

The pegasi do not respond to any bird or familiar messengers. If Fray could fly up and talk to them, he would, but his lame wing prevents him from doing so. The mountains happen to be an extremely dangerous place, and the DM should roll four times on Encounter Table B during the first day in the mountains.

D. The Cliff. Toward the end of the day, the PCs reach a very steep cliff 150′ high. Each PC must make three climbing checks to reach the top safely. Non-thieves have a 40% chance of success for each roll, and those with mountaineering gain a +10% bonus per proficiency slot. If the PCs are fortunate enough to have ropes, spikes or other climbing tools, give them a +55% bonus to the roll. Be sure to use the race and armor modifiers from the *Player's Handbook.* If not secured by a rope, anyone failing the first check falls, suffering 3d6 hp damage. Anyone failing the second check falls and suffers 6d6 hp damage. Anyone failing the third check falls, suffering 10d6 hp damage.

Once the PCs reach the top, read the following:

> As you climb over the ridge, you find yourself atop a wide open plateau. A strong wind blows steadily over the grass and rocks of the flat mountain plain. No more than one hundred yards in front of you is a line of trees that appear to be the border of a small mountaintop forest. The sight from up here is breathtaking, and you can see for miles. Black clouds still hang low over the Emory Wood. Fray informs you that the pegasi live in the forest ahead. As you approach, you can see the distant forms of many winged horses soaring high in the sky above.

As the PCs near the edge of the trees, three white pegasi fly down to observe them. If the PCs call out to the winged horses and don't appear to be hostile, the pegasi land about 20′ in front of them. The pegasi can understand common, though they can't speak it. Fortunately, Fray is able to speak the language of pegasi and translates for the PCs, serving only as a translator while leaving the actual diplomacy to the PCs. If the PCs explain the situation and request help, the pegasi guide the PCs into the forest to talk to their herd leader. Read the following:

> The three pegasi lead you through the calm and beautiful forest. After a few minutes you come to a large clearing, filled with wildflowers and green grass. A dozen more of the majestic pegasi graze and frolic in the sylvan haven, stopping to observe your party as you are led to the center of the meadow. One of the pegasi nods its head and shakes its mane.
>
> Fray translates, "Please, be seated if you like." Moments later, a large shadow passes overhead. Looking up, you see the largest and most powerful pegasus of them all descending from the sky. It lands gracefully no more than a dozen feet away, its shimmering black coat reflecting the warm rays of the sun. The beautiful creature folds its elegant wings, stands to its full height of eight feet, and looks down at you.

This creature is Maiya, a greater pegasus and the leader of the herd. She nods slightly to Fray before asking the PCs why they have come.

Greater Pegasus: INT high; AL CG; AC 6; MV 24, fly 48 (C, D if mounted); HD 6; hp 36; THAC0 16; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d3; SA dive with hooves from 50′ or higher at +2 to hit and double damage; SZ L; MR 20%; ML 12; XP 650; *MM*/285.

The PCs notice a look of recognition between Fray and the black pegasus. If the PCs explain their situation to Maiya, she is more than willing to help them, provided they have done nothing to jeopardize their trustworthiness.

Allow the PCs to take a rest (they should be in need of it). The pegasi watch over them during the night. If one of the PCs is a paladin of 4th level or higher who has not yet obtained or who has lost his war horse, he now has a chance to win a special mount. You may

even decide to reward a particularly heroic fighter or priest with this encounter, even if he is not a paladin.

If you decide to use this encounter, the paladin is nudged awake during the middle of the night by Maiya, who leads the PC away from the others quietly so as not to wake them. Fray flutters down from a tree to join them, telling the character to leave all of his or her belongings behind and to follow Maiya without question. If the PC agrees, Maiya guides him through the dark forest on foot for some time, finally emerging from the forest's northernmost boundary which runs along a steep cliff face. Looking out on the beautiful moonlit landscape, the PC sees a single black pegasus swooping about in the open sky. This is one of Maiya's sons, Genesee.

The white diamond on his forehead marked Genesee at birth with a destiny to serve a great and worthy hero. Feeling that the paladin may be the hero Genesee is to serve, Maiya has brought the PC here to undergo a test of bravery and a rite of passage. She calls out to her son, and shortly thereafter he lands on the cliff's edge. Maiya nudges the paladin toward her son. Genesee (who has never fully believed in his destiny) resists any attempts the PC makes to mount him. The PC must make a riding, land-based proficiency check at a –5 penalty before he or she is able to successfully mount the steed. Genesee snorts and attempts to throw the character (another check at –3 must be made to remain mounted).

At this, Maiya grunts in disapproval and Genesee makes no further attempts to throw the PC while on the ground.

Now the test begins. Genesee leaps into the air and flies far away from the cliff edge with great speed. After they are high above the mountains, Genesee begins to perform turns, spins, dives, and other gut-wrenching maneuvers intended to throw the PC off. Have the character roll five successful airborne riding proficiency checks (if the PC does not have this proficiency yet, substitute Wisdom checks with a –5 penalty). If the PC fails more than one proficiency check, he or she falls off and plummets toward the ground. If this happens, a watchful Maiya flies down and catches the PC. If the PC falls or gives up, Maiya leads the paladin back to camp. Should the character fail and insist on trying again, he or she may do so, but Maiya does not suggest it.

The PC can make as many attempts as he likes. Once he is successful, Genesee steadies out and takes the PC back to the cliffside. After performing a short bonding ceremony in a language the PC is not able to understand, Maiya nods once, motioning for her son and the PC to return to camp.

Off to the Summitpines

The next morning, the PCs wake to a healthy breakfast of nuts and berries collected for them by the pegasi. Fray translates for Maiya, informing the PCs that one pegasus per PC is to accompany them to the mountains. Each PC is then approached by a mount, selected from the fastest and sturdiest by Maiya herself. If one of the PCs was able to win Genesee, he serves as that character's mount.

Pegasi mounts: INT average; AL CG; AC 6; MV 24, fly 48 (C, D with rider); HD 4; hp 24 each; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d3; SA dive with hooves from 50′ or higher at +2 to hit and double damage; SZ L; ML 11; XP 175; *MM*/285.

Genesee: INT high; HD 5; hp 32; THAC0 16; XP 270; all other statistics as a normal pegasus (see above).

After the PCs mount, read or paraphrase the following:

> Maiya nods to you, then the entire herd rears up on their hind legs, whinnying wildly. Fray hops from Maiya's back onto one of your mounts and says, "They wish you luck."
>
> Your steeds vault into the air, effortlessly spreading their wings to lift you off of the ground. Clutching their manes for dear life, you rise higher and higher. Soon you are soaring through the sky, far above the forest and the mountains. The pegasi turn to the west, lunging forward with great speed. The wind becomes almost unbearable as you begin your journey above the clouds.

The journey to the nearest mountain that promises to contain the summitpine takes the PCs one day of travel on the backs of the speedy pegasi. Fray leads the way. The pegasi stop to rest only if asked by the PCs. The pegasi ride steadily, and no proficiency checks

must be made at this time. Toward the end of the day, the PCs spot a long range of tall mountains in the distance. Read the following:

> As you make your final approach to the mountains, a piercing shriek rings out over the wind. Your mount rears up, nearly throwing you from its back. It arcs up toward the sky, whinnying a cry of warning to the others. Looking up, you see two gigantic eagles with the bodies of lions diving at you with outstretched claws.

A pair of griffons live atop the mountains and are currently out hunting for prey. Having spotted the pegasi, the griffons fight ferociously to satiate their hunger for the flesh of the horse-kin.

Any PC not trained in aerial combat cannot fight effectively. Anyone not trained who wishes to use a weapon can only do so one-handed and suffers a –3 penalty to the attack roll. Missile weapons and spells can be used if the mount is convinced to stay still in the air, which it isn't likely to do if its friends are being attacked. Any PC who strikes a griffon in melee brings the full fury of the beast upon its attacker. Any PC without airborne riding proficiency struck by a griffon must make a Wisdom check at –5 or be thrown from his or her mount, falling to his death unless able to stop his fall or a pegasus can break away from combat to dive after them. If a griffon or pegasus is brought below 50% of its original hit points, it can no longer remain in flight and is forced to glide to safety atop the mountains. Normally, the pegasi would simply flee the griffons, but they fight for the sake of the PCs and their quest.

Griffons (2): INT semi-; AL N; AC 3; MV 12, fly 30 (C, D if mounted); HD 7; hp 29, 28; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/2d8; SZ L; ML 12; XP 650; *MM*/178.

Many summitpines can be found atop the mountain. A single pine cone provides the PCs with dozens of seeds. Any pegasus that was brought below 50% of its hit points must be healed to a majority of its hit points before it can make the journey back. Regardless, all of them need at least six hours rest before they can depart.

After an uneventful journey back, the pegasi take the PCs straight to the Emory Wood, wherever the PCs instruct them. The PCs must now prepare the forest for the ridding of the curse.

If the PCs have not yet dealt with Eulaos, they must do so now. He can be found wandering the northern portion of the Emory Wood. (Refer to Encounter Table A.) If the PCs have already dispatched the evil Eulaos and are in possession of his *medallion*, Slithisk has patiently awaited their return, setting up an ambush in the process. While the PCs were gone, Slithisk caught sight of a large band of orcs traveling along the river toward the mountains. The orcs, members of the Bloodclaw tribe, were on their way to fight their longtime enemies, the gnolls, when Slithisk *charmed* their leader and brought them into his employ to do battle with the PCs. Expecting the adventurers to come to the treants' aid, Slithisk and the orcs have set up an ambush in the center of the forest and are waiting to move in for the kill. If the PCs aren't able to detect the ambush (via magic or careful scouting) upon their return to the grove, read the following:

> All is silent as you drift through the dark clouds enshrouding the treants' grove. Your mounts pass through the bare branches and land softly in the dead grass.
>
> The treants are scattered about the grove, motionless amid their fallen leaves. You spot Evelyn slumped against the base of a tree at the edge of the glade. Her head lolls forward, and her face is obscured by her long, graying hair. There isn't a single sign of life in the entire area.
>
> Suddenly, a deafening war cry breaks out from all around. Dozens of humanoids clad in armor rush you from the cover of the trees. From their green skin and glowing red eyes, you recognize them as orcs.

Orcs (25): INT average; AL LE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; XP 15; *MM*/281. Each orc is outfitted with a dagger, studded leather armor, and a shield. Ten of the orcs are armed with spears, ten with war clubs, and the remaining five with long swords.

Orc subchief: INT average; AC 4; HD 2; hp 11; SA +1 to damage; other statistics as a normal orc; he has a *mace +1*, a dagger, chain mail, and a shield.

Slithisk (dark naga): INT exceptional; AL LE; AC 6; MV 13; HD 9; hp 43; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4/2d4; SA poison; SD +2 save. vs. charm, immune to acid, poisons, and mind reading; SZ L; ML 15; XP 4,000; *MM*/267. In combat, Slithisk can use his sting and either a bite (non-poisonous) or a spell in the same round. Anyone stung by the tail must save vs. poison or suffer 1d2 additional hp damage and fall asleep for 2d4 rounds. He casts spells as a 6th-level wizard, and has the following spells memorized: *charm person, magic missile, phantasmal force, shield; darkness 15***8** *radius, flaming sphere; blink, vampiric touch.* He also knows how to cast *comprehend languages, gaze reflection, detect invisibility, whispering wind,* and *clairvoyance.* Slithisk can memorize his spells without the assistance of a spell book.

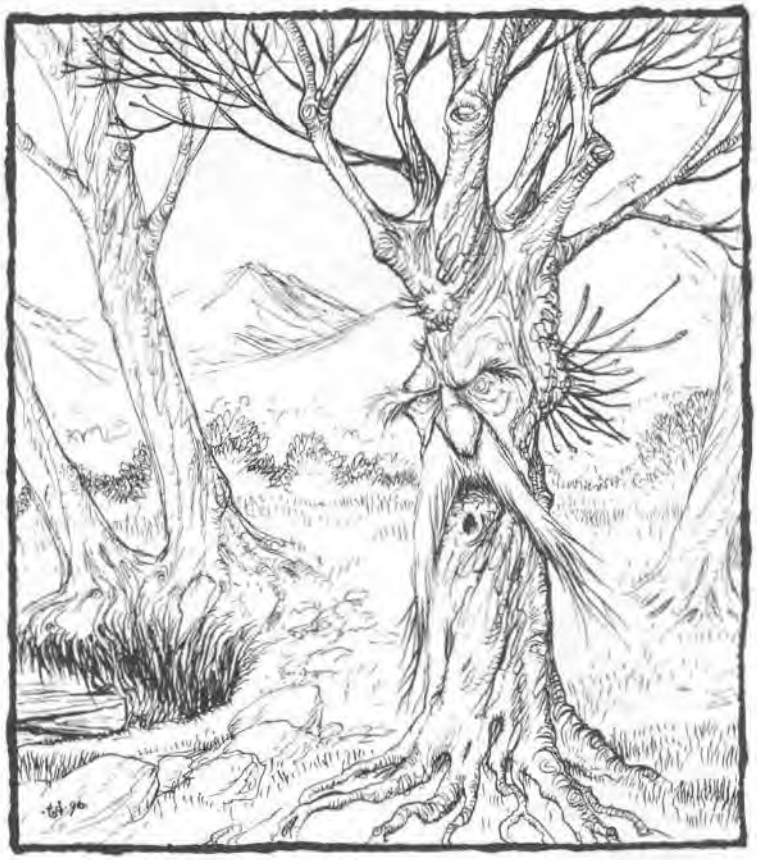
Slithisk casts spells from a distance, ignoring the orcs in relation to his area effect spells if it means he can get most of the PCs. If the PCs have returned in time, Evelyn and the treants are still alive, but barely so. The PCs must be careful to protect them (especially from Slithisk's *flaming sphere* spell), and it might even be best to lead the battle away from the grove. Evelyn and the treants can suffer only 8 hp damage each before they are slain. The pegasi fight fiercely alongside the PCs, but they must fight on the ground due to the confines of the tree branches above.

Remember that Slithisk is very cunning. He does anything he can to obtain the *medallion* without being killed. If captured, he attempts to *charm* the PCs in an attempt to convince them that they should return the item that was stolen from him by an evil priest.

Concluding the Adventure

If Evelyn and the treants are still alive when the PCs return, they are in a deep, comalike slumber and remain so until the curse is removed. They appear dead, but close inspection reveals otherwise. If the PCs have returned within five days after leaving Silverbark's grove, the moon is still full enough for the summitpine seed to be planted in time. Planting the seed summons a rain in 2d6 rounds. After the PCs administer the *sweet water* to the inhabitants of the grove (assuming all of the evil creatures have been dealt with), Silverbark's acorn can be planted and a *remove curse* spell can then be cast. If the PCs don't have a priest who is able to cast *remove curse,* then Silverbark arrives shortly after the PCs' battle with Slithisk to remove the curse himself. The dark

Greater Treant



Climate/Terrain:	Secluded forests
Frequency:	Rare
Organization:	Solitary
Activity Cycle:	Any
Diet:	Photosynthesis
Intelligence:	Exceptional (15–16)
Treasure:	Q (5), S, T
Alignment:	Chaotic good

No. Appearing:	1
Armor Class:	–2
Movement:	9
Hit Dice:	16
THAC0:	5
No. of Attacks:	2
Damage/Attack:	6–36
Special Attacks:	See below
Special Defenses:	Never surprised
Magic Resistance:	30%
Size:	G (26'–36')
Morale:	Fanatic (17–18)
XP Value:	16,000

Greater treants are solitary beings found deep within forests far away from civilization. Identical to treants in most respects, greater treants are larger and more powerful than their lesser cousins. As sworn protectors of the forests, greater treants can be called upon in times of great need to aid a region's inhabitants. In addition to the language of treants, greater treants can speak most humanoid languages and have the innate ability to communicate with all plants and animals. Some also speak in the secret tongue of druids.

Combat: Greater treants are most often found (99%) in deep slumbers that may last for more than a century. Anyone with evil intent entering a greater treant's grove (which is usually protected) awakens it in 1–2 rounds. Also, anyone who speaks a greater treant's name while inside its grove will wake it in 1d4 rounds. Aside from their magical abilities, greater treants can attack twice per round using their giant, armlike branches for 6d6 hp damage. Their hardened, barklike skin provides them with a low armor class.

Greater treants have the ability to animate and control normal trees. A greater treant can animate up to 10 normal trees at a time. It takes one round for a tree to be animated. The trees found within a greater treant's forest are unusually large and have superior combat abilities: 14 Hit Dice, two attacks, 5d6 hp damage per attack, and MV 1.

In addition to their magic resistance, greater treants are immune to all *charm*-related spells. Greater treants have many magical abilities which they employ as a 16th-level priest. Once per round a greater treant may use the following spell-like abilities: *detect magic, entangle, know alignment, messenger, neutralize poison,* and *plant growth.* In addition, they may also use the following abilities once per day: *animal summoning III, call woodland beings, charm person or mammal, dispel magic, reflecting pool,* and *remove curse.*

Greater treants suffer a weakness against fire attacks like normal treants, and magical fires cannot be resisted.

Habitat/Society: Greater treants live alone in secluded groves. They are intolerant of evil and any threat to the forests in which they live. If called upon in times of danger, a greater treant does everything in its power to ensure the well-being of its forest. Greater treants have no use for treasure and keep such items buried deep beneath their roots, only to be used for the cause of good.

Ecology: Greater treants, like their smaller cousins, obtain sustenance via photosynthesis. The lifespan of greater treants is unknown. It is believed that they are exceptionally ancient beings divinely chosen to stand watch over nature until the end of time. They are assumed to have been around since long before the birth of humankind (some say even before the time of the elves), and no one has ever heard of a greater treant dying of old age.

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cloud over the forest disappears, and after a day's passing, the surviving plants and animals begin to show drastic signs of improvement. Before long, all is back to normal.

The PCs should be awarded an additional 2,000 XP for removing the curse in time. If the PCs return to the forest after more than 10 days since their departure from the grove, Evelyn, the treants, and most of Emory Wood are dead. Even in this worst-case scenario, to remove the curse would at least allow new plants to grow. Over time, other animals would return to the forest.

If Slithisk survives without acquiring the *medallion*, the PCs have made a dangerous enemy. He will no doubt return at a later date with an intricate scheme to obtain his *medallion* (and his vengeance). On the other hand, the PCs have earned the undying gratitude of Evelyn and the treants, who promise to offer any services they can to the PCs. The PCs will always be welcome in the Emory Wood where the treants can provide them with sanctuary and protection. Evelyn, a promising druid, has the potential someday to become an archdruid or great druid and would be a most powerful ally. In addition, Evelyn and the treants offer their most valued possessions to the PCs. The treants offer five gems (one worth 500 gp, two worth 100 gp, and two worth 50 gp), two *potions of healing*, a *potion of fire resistance*, and a *potion of longevity*. Evelyn even offers them her *ring of spell storing*. Any horses the PCs left at Silverbark's grove or at the base of the mountains are escorted back to the grove by Derva the unicorn, at Silverbark's request.

Jixie and Prite, if befriended, may choose to accompany the PCs on another adventure or two if it sounds interesting enough, but will eventually take off on their own to satisfy some other curiosity. Even the wise Fray might come to the characters' aid in the future and advise them on some dangerous quest. Ω

NIGHT SWARM

BY LORRI E. HULBERT

Insecticide

Artwork by Tony DiTerlizzi
Cartography by Roy Boholst

This is Lorri E. Hulbert's first appearance in the pages of DUNGEON® Adventures. *Says Lorri: "My goal is to move to a city that is not so hot and dry. The only good thing about Las Vegas is that there are very few mosquitoes. I would like to thank the men of my D&D® gaming group of 12 years: Tony, Mark, and Frank."*

Night Swarm is an AD&D® adventure set in Rhorton's Grove, a small town in a wet river valley. The adventure is designed for a group of 3–5 PCs of levels 5–7 (25 total levels). Inclusion of a spellcaster is strongly recommended but not necessary.

The PCs must solve the mystery of the insect swarms plaguing the townspeople of Rhorton's Grove. The climate is important to the flavor of the adventure. The weather is hot and muggy, with little change in temperature between day and night. The humidity is oppressive. Clothing smells musty, weapons rust, and leather softens when not properly tended. The temperature usually ranges between 95° and 105°. The strong scent of the bog lilies and the drone of insects are constant irritants.

For the DM

The adventure should cover two days of PC play (though it could take longer). The major villain is Lyman Frack, a vampire. Optional reference materials include the *MONSTROUS MANUAL*™ tome and the RAVENLOFT® accessory *Van Richten's Guide to Vampires.* Dream powers are an integral part of this adventure; however, the only one necessary to completing the adventure, the dream power summon, is described in a sidebar (page 63). Dreamscapes and powers are fully described in the RAVENLOFT accessory *The Nightmare Lands.*

Rhorton's Grove is a small community where the villagers produce a perfumed oil scented with bog lilies indigenous to the area. The isolation of the village has made it a perfect target for the insidious Lyman Frack, who has recently escaped destruction by a party of vampire hunters. Lyman has the unusual ability to change form into a swarm of mosquitoes and thereby drain his victim of blood. Prior to his un-life as a vampire, Lyman had been an herbalist. He now uses this skill as part of his disguise.

At the time that the adventure begins, Lyman has maintained a "clinic" outside of town near the river falls for about a year. He often takes sick townspeople to the clinic to recover from the effects of insect bites. In fact, he has faked the deaths of several townspeople, sneaking them away to the cavern underneath his quarters as feeding stock for when he cannot find enough victims to satisfy his thirst elsewhere. He claims that the clinic is located some distance from the town so that contagious diseases of the sick do not spread. In reality, the distance hides his evil activities.

Day One

The PCs arrive in Rhorton's Grove after a day of tiring travel. The inn is a welcome sight, as the humid weather and rain have drained the mounts of energy and made their movements lethargic.

> The hours endured in the still, humid air have been relieved only by an occasional sprinkle of rain. While the rain made movement in the soggy ground difficult for the mounts, at least it drove away the insects, which have tormented your party.
>
> Near dusk, you approach a small village where the scent of the local flowers is intensified, the air so thick with the perfume that it seems difficult to breathe. The simple wooden houses have thatched roofs and many windows to catch any breeze. The largest building in town is the Rhorton Inn, a welcome sight — the thought of a cool drink is tempting.
>
> The townspeople move about in small groups, strolling along quietly at a leisurely pace. The men are dressed in simple tunics and trousers, while the women are wearing summer dresses of a thin soft fabric and have flowers woven into their hair. A soft glow of light from the windows of the Inn beckons you.

A. The Rhorton Inn. The Rhorton Inn is the only source of lodging in this area. The PCs must choose between staying at the inn and camping out of doors, which exposes them to random encounters as well as to the insects.

Any spellcaster who attempts to sleep outdoors must make a Wisdom check (priests) or Intelligence check (wizards) to regain spells the next day, due to the constant attack of these bugs. This penalty can only be avoided if they use mosquito netting or some other light fabric to cover themselves. Those sleeping outside are also subject to a 25% chance of a random encounter.

At the Rhorton Inn, the PCs can obtain lodging and food for a reasonable price. The aging innkeeper, Armon Grimm, is slow moving but very cheerful and eager to serve. (After all, this is an isolated community, and not many travelers pass through.) He eagerly listens to any stories of triumph the PCs have to tell him, and he might even refill empty glasses to keep the tongues loose.

An hour after dusk, supper time at the inn, a young townsman brings the news that Armon's grandson has fallen ill. The innkeeper cries out and tearfully asks if anyone is willing to seek out the herbalist, who lives on the cliffs about a mile and a half west of town, at this late hour. The townsfolk in the room look down at their food, unwilling to make eye contact with Armon. They know the dangers of the swamp at night and are too afraid to help him. Since the PCs are the only people who are (presumably) looking at him, Armon begs for their help. He offers any reasonable request of payment that the party requires, to a limit of 100 gp. If the PCs agree, Armon takes them to the Grimm house, where the child can be found.

B. The Grimm House. In the upstairs bedroom, a child lies unmoving on his bed. Upon close examination, the PCs find what look like small insect bites all over the child's body. The child has been drained by Lyman Frack for 2 hp damage and currently has only 1 hp remaining. He is very ill from the toxins in his blood.

A cleric may apply curative or healing spells, but the child still retains the vampire's toxins and does not regain consciousness. Nothing short of a *wish* spell brings the child around.

The PCs must seek out Lyman Frack in order to save the child. Armon urges the PCs to seek out the herbalist and tells them that if they follow the river west they will find Lyman Frack's clinic at the top of the falls, not quite two miles from town.

C. The Swamp. At night the swamp is unpleasant and often deadly. It is very dark; tall, hanging trees obscure the moon. Movement is reduced to one-eighth of normal. PCs unfamiliar with swampy terrain spend most of the trip up to their knees in muck, but a ranger can discern a light trail along the south side of the river. Following this trail, the party can increase movement to one-half the normal rate. Aside from the scent of the lilies, the smell of decay is evident. During the trek to Lyman's clinic, the DM should role for random encounters.

D. The Graveyard. The PCs must pass the graveyard each time they travel to and from Lyman's clinic if they follow the path. The first time they pass it, read the following:

> In the middle of the swamp, in a clearing beside the path, stand a few lonely gravestones. The dim moon casts its dull pallor on the markers. It is a lonely, desolate place. A few graves look newer than the others.

The newer graves are actually empty; they are the ones Lyman Frack had made to "bury" those who "died" of their illnesses recently. The fake graves have

Rumor Table (1d8)

1. The town of Rhorton's Grove has been cursed by the ghosts of the Rhorton family, whose graves were disturbed by bandits. (False)

2. Three adults and two children have passed away in the last year from the insect bites. (False — they are captives of Lyman Frack)

3. Those who died have been buried in a clearing near the falls. (False — the graves are empty)

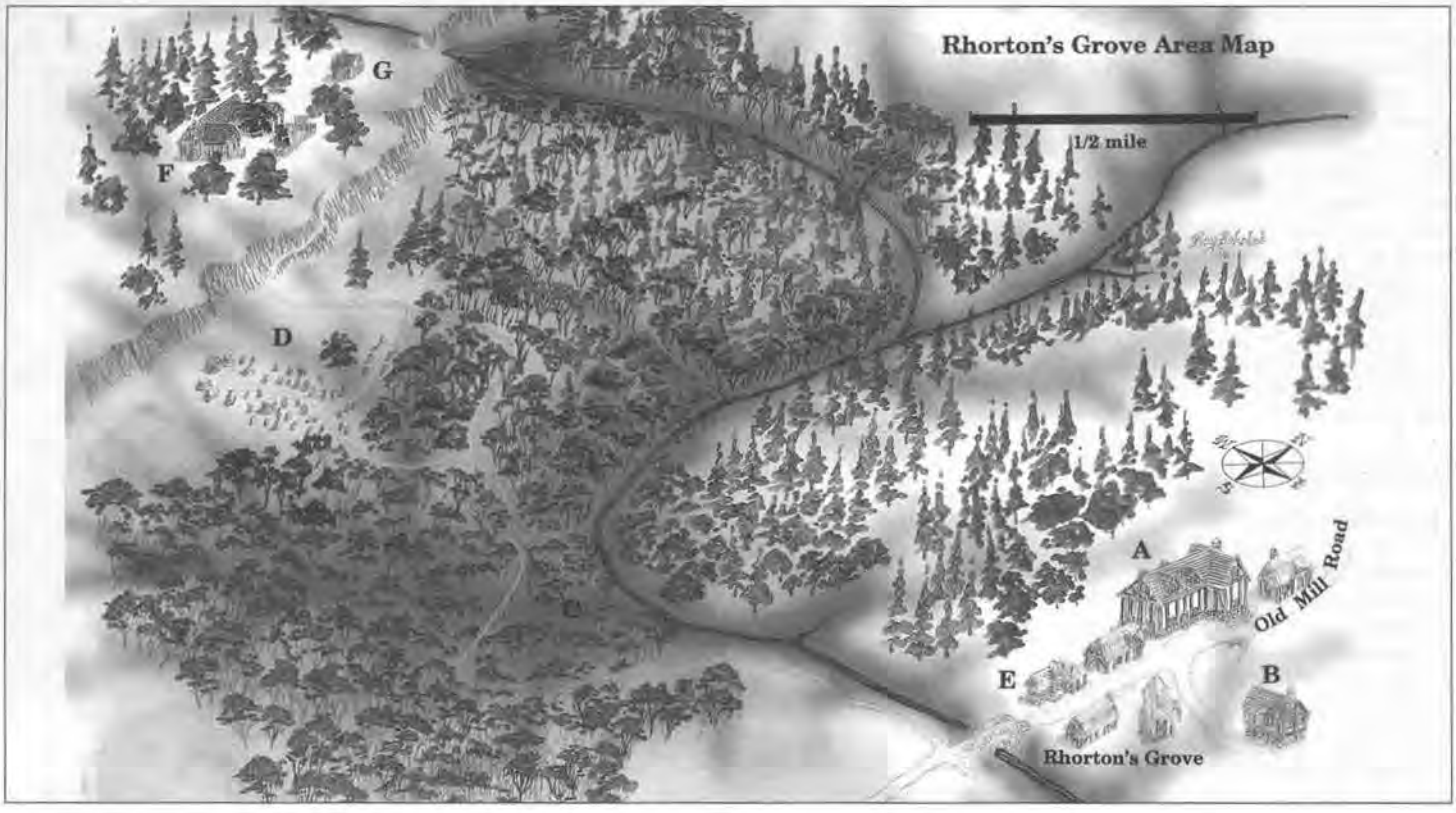
4. The insect attacks have all occurred during the night. (True)

5. Most of the victims of the attacks have recovered at Lyman Frack's clinic with his aid and that of a priestess. (True)

6. Lyman Frack founded the clinic a little more than a year ago. (True)

7. Lyman Frack is a dedicated herb collector and spends each day deep in the forest above the cliffs. (False — he spends the day in his coffin, though he was an herbalist when he was living)

8. Derrick Sharpaxe, a local huntsman and a victim of the insects, fled from the swamp one night, engulfed in a swarm of mosquitoes. (True)



coffins, but the coffins themselves contain only sandbags.

A few feet beyond the clearing, the swamp again nearly swallows the path leading to the clinic.

Meeting Lyman Frack

Lyman senses the PCs' approach when they near the falls.

Swamp Encounter Table

Roll 1d4

1. Giant Centipedes (2d12): INT non-; AL N; AC 9; MV 15; HD less than 1 (2 hp each); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA poison; SZ T (1'); ML 6; *MM*/42.

2. Giant Rats (5d4): INT animal; AL NE; AC 7; MV 12; HD ½; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA disease; SZ T (2'); ML 6; *MM*/300.

3. Huge Spiders (1d12): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 2 + 2; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA poison; SZ M (6'); ML 8; *MM*/326.

4. Cockatrice (1d3): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 6, fly 18; HD 5; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA petrification; SZ S (3'); ML 12; *MM*/45.

"Isn't it a little dangerous to be tromping through the swamp at night?"

You turn to find a middle-aged man standing behind you. He is tall and thin, with a little gray hair around his temples. His hands are filled with ferns and night-blooming flowers. He smiles as he squints at you through his spectacles.

"Oh, the look on your faces!" he giggles. "I am Lyman, an herbalist of sorts. What could possibly bring you into the mire at this late hour?"

If the PCs explain their purpose and are polite, Lyman agrees to accompany them back to the village. He has his supplies with him. He chats with the PCs in a friendly manner on the way.

Lyman Frack (mature vampire): INT genius; AL CE; AC 1 ; MV 12, fly 12; HD 9+3; hp 45; THAC0 11; #AT 2 in insect form, 1 in human form; Dmg 2d8/2d8 in insect form, 1d6+4 in human form; SA energy drain; SD see below; SZ M; ML 16; XP 9,000; *MM*/355.

Lyman has the powers of a normal vampire and can use the following spell-like powers once per day: *entangle, locate animals or plants, warp wood,* and *animate dead.*

Having been an herbalist when he was alive, Lyman has none of the normal herbal weaknesses of a vampire. He always exudes a faint smell of herbs. He can use his energy drain only when in human form, and magical weapons are required to strike him. He prefers to fight in insect swarm form, as this gives him immunity to physical weapons (sharp or blunt). In this form, he cannot be harmed by weapons, but he can be harmed by magical area attacks that would affect normal insects. A flaming torch causes normal club damage, and flaming oil is effective if thrown on the ground beneath the swarm. Holy water inflicts one-half normal damage. Each round, two small swarms of insects (2d8 insects per swarm) are ejected from the mass, attacking the PCs who doled out the most damage the previous round. Each insect inflicts 1 hp damage the first round. Each round thereafter, reduce the damage from that swarm by 1d6 to reflect the number of insects that were killed that round (smashed in armor, slapped by hands, etc.), until they are all dead or Lyman is reduced to 0 hp or flees.

Shortly after passing the graveyard on the way back to town, the PCs hear

the flapping of wings overhead. A foul stench fills the air, and feminine calls of distress are heard from the south. The stench is the result of a flock of harpies (looking for a new village to torment). They plan to use their charming calls to trap the PCs and eat them for dinner. Lyman has a dagger, which he uses to defend himself and any PC, but he is careful not to show his true strength or powers.

Harpies (4): INT 6; AL CE; AC 7; MV 6, fly 15; HD 7; THAC0 13; #AT 3 (claw/claw/club); Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6; SA charm; SZ M (6'); *MM*/184.

After the battle, Lyman tends the wounds of any injured PCs, and the trek back to Rhorton's Grove can continue. With luck, Lyman now has a good idea of the abilities of the individual PCs, and he uses this to his advantage later.

Back in Town

Upon arrival in Rhorton's Grove, Lyman treats the child with the appropriate herbal mixtures, leeching the poison from the child's system. When finished, he makes sure that the boy is resting quietly and claims that he must head back to the clinic immediately, as there are other patients to care for. He accepts an escort back to the clinic if the matter is pressed, but he prefers to travel alone. If he leaves town by himself, he turns into his insect swarm form and flies back to the clinic as soon as he is out of earshot.

When the party arrives back at the Inn, they are greeted by Armon, who has waited for their return. If the party has not asked for compensation for the service, he returns any payment made for lodging. Armon explains that there have been many such insect victims in the village this year and that he is concerned for the villagers. He believes that the source of the insect swarms is not natural, as he has lived in Rhorton's Grove all of his life, and never have they had such problems until now. He offers a reward for anyone who can discover how to rid the village of this deadly threat.

Night One

The night is not pleasant. One of the townspeople being held by Lyman Frack is Brigette, the (presumed dead) child of the town blacksmith, Byron Stronghammer. The child's sleep is filled with horrifying nightmares. Brigette is gifted with the dream power summon, which allows her to draw other sleeping individuals into her dreams. PCs sleeping in the area experience her dreams with her. The DM should pick a time that fits appropriately with the party's camping arrangements for the best effect. Each sleeping PC dreams the following:

> The smothering, damp heat makes it difficult to sleep. Finally you manage to doze off. The images of flowers fill your mind, and you are surprised to find yourself looking upon a field of soft grass and small yellow blooms.
>
> Looking around, you see other members of your party, who look equally confused. As you enjoy the cool breeze that moves the grass in waves, you hear the laughter of a child.
>
> Turning, you see a pretty, young girl sitting on a blanket in the field. She has long dark hair, the curls tied back with a ribbon. She wears a soft blue dress. Upon her blanket is a child's tea set and several dolls. The girl looks up, sees you, and smiles.
>
> "Would you like some tea?" she asks. She picks up the pot to pour, but a crimson fluid flows from it. The girl leaps back from the blanket, spilling the blood upon her dress. Suddenly, the entire scene disappears, and you find yourself sitting in your bed, bathed in sweat. You look around quickly, the girl's screams for help still ringing in your ears.

The PCs can interact with each other (only those who are sleeping), and any PC wishing to exit the dream can make one saving throw vs. spell. If the throw is unsuccessful, the PC cannot exit until the dream has concluded.

If the characters investigate, they find that no one else in the inn was disturbed by the dream.

Day Two

If all goes well, the party uses the second day to investigate the unusual insect swarms. They may speak with the townspeople, examine the local forests, or travel to see Lyman Frack. If the party questions the townspeople, they receive one piece of information from each location unless otherwise noted. Determine the information gained from the Rumor Table and the following:

If the PCs inquire about a girl of Brigette's description, the townsmen point sadly at the smithy and inform the PCs that she was the daughter of the town metalsmith, Byron Stronghammer, and that she fell victim to the insects and was buried about four months ago.

E. The Smithy. The Stronghammer home is behind the smithy. Byron can be found hard at work, making tools. He informs the PCs that his daughter, Brigette, was a victim of the insects. He does not offer any other information, and from his gruff tone the PCs can tell that the memory is still painful to him. If pressed, he confirms that Brigette was taken to Lyman's home but did not make it through the next day. He occasionally visits her grave at the bottom of the falls. Families of other victims can tell of similar experiences. In reality, Lyman used herbal concoctions to simulate the death of Brigette and his other victims, then hid them in the cell on the lower level of his lair.

Byron Stronghammer: AL NG; AC 8; MV 9; F4; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 13, C 16, I 12, W 10, Ch 9; ML 12; long sword, leather armor, heavy crossbow.

Along the Trail

The trail leading to the clinic is clearer in daylight but not much more pleasant. While the party is traveling to the clinic, there is a 25% chance of a random encounter. The DM should use the given random encounter chart on page 62. When the PCs near the falls, read the following:

> As you near the falls, the air around you becomes thick with mist. The sound of falling water is deafening here, the plummeting water sending out clouds of vapor. The trail leads to the high cliff face and heads up a narrow path carved from the stone.

Dream power summon

Dream powers are explained in detail in the RAVENLOFT accessory, *The Nightmare Lands*. These powers allow skilled dreamers to control the content of their dreamscapes. The dream power summon allows a dreamer to bring other sleeping characters into his dreamscape. The summoned dreamer may voluntarily enter the dreamscape or resist the summons by making a successful saving throw vs. spell. An unsuccessful save results in the sleeper being drawn into the summoner's dreamscape.

Meanwhile, at Lyman's Clinic...

Frack has three servants at the clinic:

Dunchatt: AL NE; AC 5; MV 12; T3; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12, D 18, C 12, I 13, W 9, Ch 12; ML 8; XP 120; three *daggers of throwing +1,* two small keys (one opens the door to his quarters, the other opens the box hidden in his quarters). NWPs: blind fighting and rope use.

Dunchatt is a small, thin man who follows Lyman fearfully. Lyman sets him the task of watching the PCs as soon as he is aware of them. Dunchatt also cleans up around the clinic.

Horvell: AL NE; AC 5; MV 9; F3; hp 23; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/23, D 10, C 16, I 7, W 8, Ch 8; ML 14; XP 65; chain mail, bastard sword, key to his quarters. NWPs: tracking, fire-building, and direction sense. Horvell is a big thug who simply has nothing better to do than work for Lyman Frack. Lyman pays him well, and does not abuse him as other masters have. He does his best to prevent the PCs from reaching Lyman during the day. Horvell helps move patients around, cuts wood, and hunts.

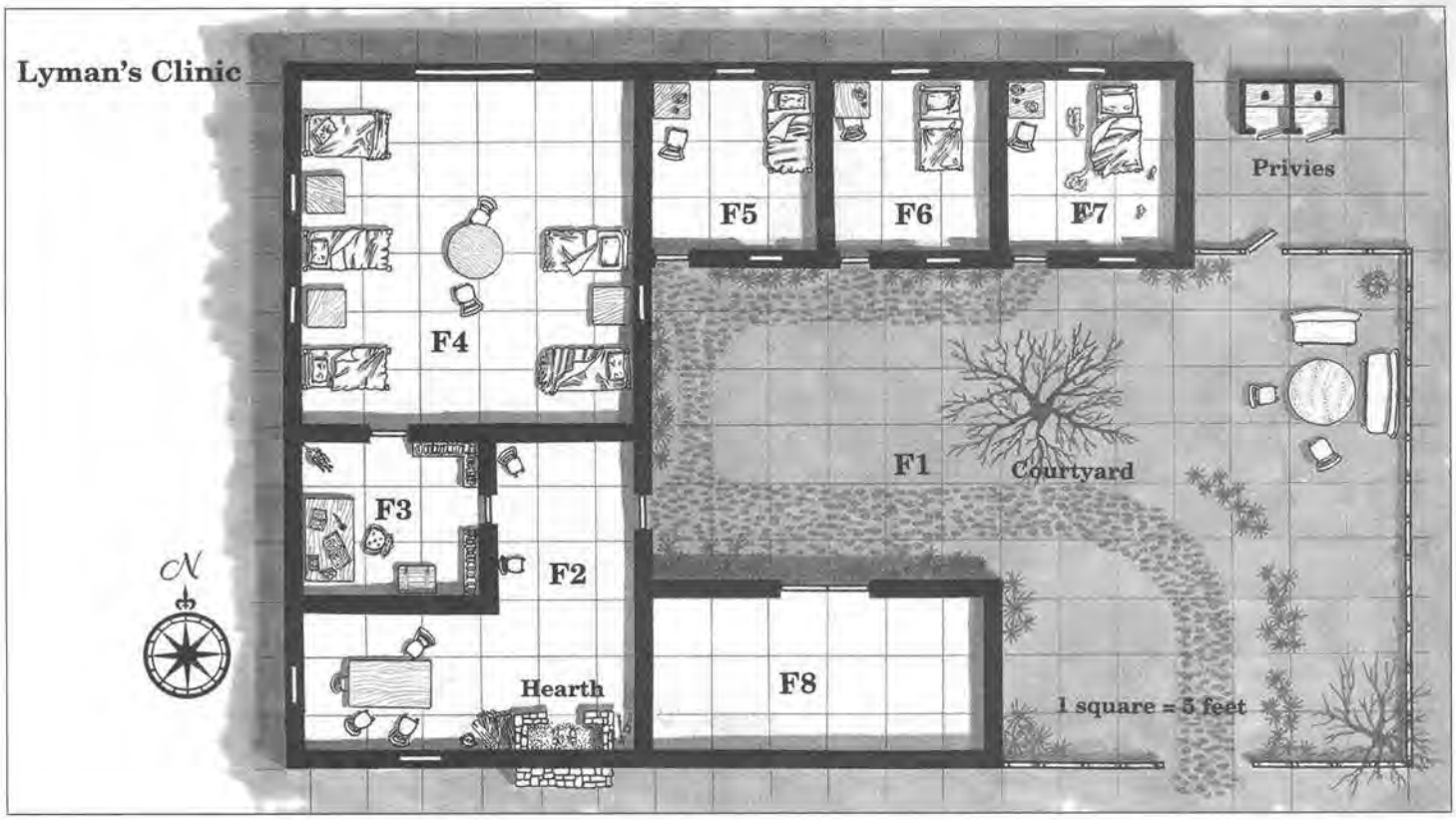
Clorisa: AL CE; AC 8; MV 12; P6; hp 37; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or spell; S 12, D 16, C 14, I 15, W 17, Ch 17; ML 12; poison dagger (contact poison type M, two keys (one opens the door to her quarters, the other opens the strongbox under her bed), and an ocelot holy symbol that she keeps hidden in her robes. NWPs: spellcraft, religion, reading/writing, herbalism, and astrology. Clorisa can cast *cause disease* once per day as a boon of Tlazoltotl. Spells: *cause light wounds* (×2), *cure light wounds* (×2), *protection from good, charm person, hold person, silence 15' radius, heat metal, enthrall, summon insects, feign death,* and *cause blindness.*

Clorisa is a priestess of Tlazoltotl, the Central American goddess of vice. She helps Lyman hide his secret and tends to the patients in the clinic. In return, she receives a share of the valuables that Lyman finds on his victims. She uses them as offerings to the goddess Tlazoltotl. Clorisa does not engage in physical combat unless absolutely necessary; instead she uses her long blond hair and beautiful face to charm her opponent. If this fails, she cowers and cries for mercy (if there are four or more opponents) and casts spells (if there are fewer than four opponents). She uses her ability to *cause disease* once per day on the first person who touches her during combat. She wields her poisoned dagger if forced. If she sees that the situation is hopeless, she casts her *feign death* spell at an appropriate and convincing time and runs away as soon as the party is out of sight.

F. The Clinic. When the PCs reach the clinic, read the following:

> From the falls, a short trail leads to several small, but well-constructed, buildings of stone and wood. Inside the gate, a blond-haired woman sits in the small courtyard of the larger building, sewing beads onto orange silk. Noticing the approach of your party, she lays down the cloth and, smiling, approaches you.

Clorisa invites the party into the courtyard, offers the party a seat at the table (and has more chairs brought if needed), and a cup of light, fruity wine. If asked, she guides the party into the clinic and gives them a tour. Lyman Frack, she claims, is in the forest searching for herbs — the frequent sickness of the townspeople has depleted the current supplies. Clorisa doesn't let the PCs into Lyman's quarters (the smaller building out back), nor does she admit to being a priestess of Tlazoltotl. As she is interested in gaining information for Lyman, Clorisa invites the party to join her for a meal, served mid-afternoon. If the PCs stay, Clorisa flirts with the most attractive male member of the party during the meal.



About an hour before sundown, Clorisa cautions the party to return to town, as it is not safe to travel during the night. After dusk, Lyman appears and greets the party if they refuse to leave without seeing him. He offers them the hospitality of his clinic if they wish to stay the night, but he suggests strongly that they return to the inn, as guest quarters at the clinic are really nonexistent. The PCs are unable to garner any information about Lyman's past, as he is very careful not to reveal much. If the party includes a PC with the herbalism proficiency, Lyman offers to supply any herb that is requested and is native to the swamp.

F1. The Courtyard

The pleasant courtyard is filled with colorful plants and flowers. In one corner is a table with chairs for relaxing. The north wall contains three doors with windows to match. On the west wall is a large window. and the obvious main entrance to the clinic proper. There is an open door on the south wall.

The doors in the north wall lead to areas **F5**, **F6**, and **F7**.

F2. Living Area

The main room of the clinic is well lit by three windows: one near the entrance, one near the hearth, and one in the far wall. The smell of cooking meat comes from a hearth on the south wall. A big man sits at a large table near the hearth, carving a new handle for the worn-looking knife lying on the table. He wears simple clothing but has the battle scars of a warrior.

The large man is Horvell. He is not talkative, but he replies to the PCs if they speak to him.

F3. Examination Room

This room contains a simple chair and a table long enough for a person to lie on. The walls are lined with shelves of pungent-smelling salves. and poultices. A small box sits on one of the shelves among the jars.

This is where the victims of this strange malady are brought when they first come to the clinic. They are rubbed with a salve that reduces itching and swelling before they are taken to the infirmary where they are put to bed. The small box contains a *cure poison* potion.

F4. The Infirmary

The room is quiet and antiseptic. There are five small beds with clean white linens and soft pillows. Three of the beds are occupied by recovering patients. There is a small table and two chairs in the center of the room. Next to each bed is a small window, with the shades partially drawn.

The three patients all look to be recovering nicely. The insect bites are faded and the napping townsmen can be awakened and spoken with. They inform the party that they have been well cared for but cannot wait to get back to their own homes and families.

Bob, Daryn, Corey (hm): AL NG; AC 10; MV 6; 0-level; hp 4, 3, 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; S 7; ML 8. None have any equipment or valuables.

Staff's Quarters

Each of these rooms contains a bed, a wardrobe, and a small table with chair. Clorisa doesn't show the party these rooms, but she explains that they are the private quarters of her and the other two workers. All have very simple furnishings and a single door and window.

F5. Horvell's Quarters. If the PCs enter this room, it should be obvious that Horvell is slovenly. Read the following text:

> The only real furnishings in this room are a narrow bed and a small table and chair. There are clothing, empty wine jugs, and other things strewn everywhere.

It takes an hour to search this room thoroughly due to the mess. Hidden under the trash are several small sacks containing four 100-gp gems, two 50-gp gems, and 240 gp. There is also a small wooden box containing two *potions of extra-healing* here.

F6. Clorisa's Quarters. If the PCs enter this room, read the following text:

> This room smells of incense. Silks hang from the ceiling and walls and soft carpets cover the floor. The only furnishings are a simple bed, table, and chair. On the table is a small wooden statuette and a bowl.

The statuette is an ocelot totem made of fine wood, and a silver and gold bowl (200 gp) filled with incense. Under her bed is a locked strong box containing 400 gp worth of jewelry and a beautiful orange silk gown (100 gp).

F7. Dunchatt's Quarters. If the PCs enter this room, read the following:

> Save for a bed, table, and chair, this room is virtually bare. There is a rag on the table.

Dunchatt keeps his room neat and tidy; there are few personal belongings here. There is a bottle of oil under the cloth on the table.

Beneath the table is a loose floor tile that hides a secret compartment underneath. The compartment contains a heavy metal chest with a fine lock (–20% on unlocking attempts). The metal chest is covered with type-M contact poison. When Dunchatt opens the box, he protects his hands by coating them with the oil he keeps on the table. Within the box is a potion-size bottle of the poison and a collection of jewelry worth 1,000 gp.

F8. Storage Room. The storage room contains bottles, bags, and other collecting materials, along with a wash basin and other household tools. The door is kept unlocked.

Night Two

During the second night, regardless of whether the party sleeps in the inn or at the clinic, they are again assaulted by nightmares. The DM should read the following to the affected members at the appropriate time:

> The chirping of insects and frogs lulls you to sleep. In your dreams, a mist summons you from the security of your bed out into the dark swamp. The sound of the insects fades until you hear only the dripping of condensation from the moss-covered trees. You find yourself and (the other affected PCs) standing under a bright, full moon, at the edge of the still water looking into your reflection in its smooth surface.
>
> The sound of splashing and giggling comes to your ears and a light ripple distorts your image in the dank mirror. You find the young girl from last night standing in the mire, trying to catch fish. Though she has tucked her skirt into her waist, the hem is soaked, and she stops to wring the water from her dress. When she sees you, she smiles and waves. Running toward you, the pretty girl trips and falls in.
>
> You hear her scream for help as she erupts from the water. She is covered with leeches from head to toe, small rivulets of blood seeping from each wound. She disappears under the surface of the water again.

Brigette has disappeared from the dream, but the leeches have not. If any in the party attempt to search for her, they must escape from the leeches. Any PC who is standing anywhere in the stream or going into it suffers 1d10 hp damage each round until he leaves. The bottom of the stream becomes magically slick, and each round the PCs must make a Dexterity check or slip and fall. Fallen PCs take a full round to stand back up. It takes two rounds of movement to exit the stream. Any PC killed in the dream must make a system shock roll or suffer severe insomnia for 1d10 days. Such a PC is unable to sleep (and hence, regain spells) during this time, due to a fear of dying in his sleep. PCs may exit the dream by making a successful saving throw vs. spell. When all PCs have escaped from the stream or run out of hit points, the dream fades. Note which PC has suffered the most damage, or pick one at random if no one has been injured. Lyman Frack has decided that the party of adventurers has become a threat, and the chosen PC is his next victim. Every other PC awakens, finding himself physically undamaged by the battle.

Swarm of Leeches (200–500): INT non-; AL N; AC 10; MV swim 1; HD special; hp 1 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 each round PC is in the affected area; SA drain blood; ML 5.

As the dream fades, a loud scream comes from one of the party.

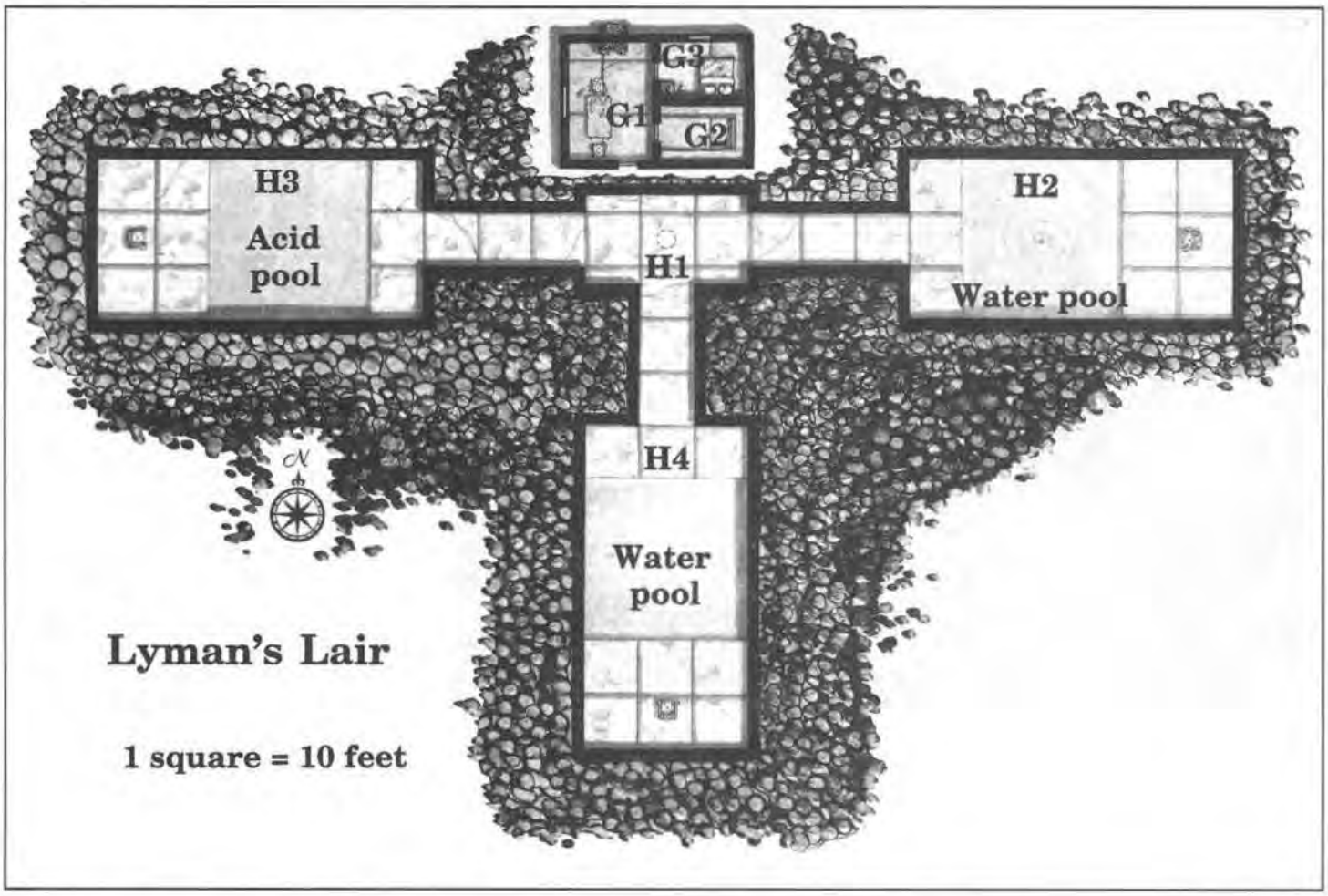
The Swarm Attacks

> As you stumble about, still half asleep, you hear the horrible drone of insects. Your companion thrashes about, still in the thrall of the nightmare. Small mosquitoes cover every inch of exposed flesh like a carpet of iridescent wings. The rest of the swarm flies around in circles, each insect looking for an exposed spot of tender flesh on which to land.

Two rounds after the party awakens, the insects fly away and head into the forest at a movement rate of 12. Any alert PC notices the open window (if the party is sleeping indoors) and a lingering smell of herbs left in the wake of the swarm (Lyman exudes the scent of herbs even in insect form). The PC awakens with a start, but he is not badly injured, having suffered only 1d6 hp damage in the attack. If the PCs follow the insects within five rounds, they should be allowed to stay just within hearing range of the strange droning sound of the swarm long enough to realize the direction in which it is heading.

Lyman's Lair

By now, the PCs should suspect that Lyman has something to do with the insect attacks and go to investigate his quarters at the clinic. The nightmare that awakened the PCs has thwarted Lyman's plan to eliminate one of them quietly. Lyman realizes that he was nearly caught and has ordered Dunchatt, Horvell, and Clorisa to ambush anyone who approaches the complex. Dunchatt and Horvell will assault the party when they reach the top of the cliff while Clorisa casts spells. Alternatively, if the PCs spent the night at the clinic, Lyman's employees attack the party as they attempt to enter Lyman's quarters.



G1. Living Area

This room is simply furnished, and herbs are stacked everywhere. The smell is strong but pleasant. There are two doors in the east wall.

G2. Storage room

This dark room is lined with shelves, and all of them are stacked from floor to ceiling with boxes and vials and jars full of dried herbs.

There may be herbs the PCs can use (at the DM's discretion).

G3. Bedroom

A tall, ornately carved standing wardrobe dominates the room. Opposite it is a bed with rumpled bedding.

The wardrobe holds neatly folded, clothing, mostly black silk and linen. A secret door under the wardrobe leads to a 4′-diameter, 30′-deep shaft. This shaft is the entrance to a cave once used by bandits to hide after raiding local villages. The air coming from this shaft makes the room much cooler than the rest of the house. The shaft has no ladder. (Lyman does not need one.)

Short Halls

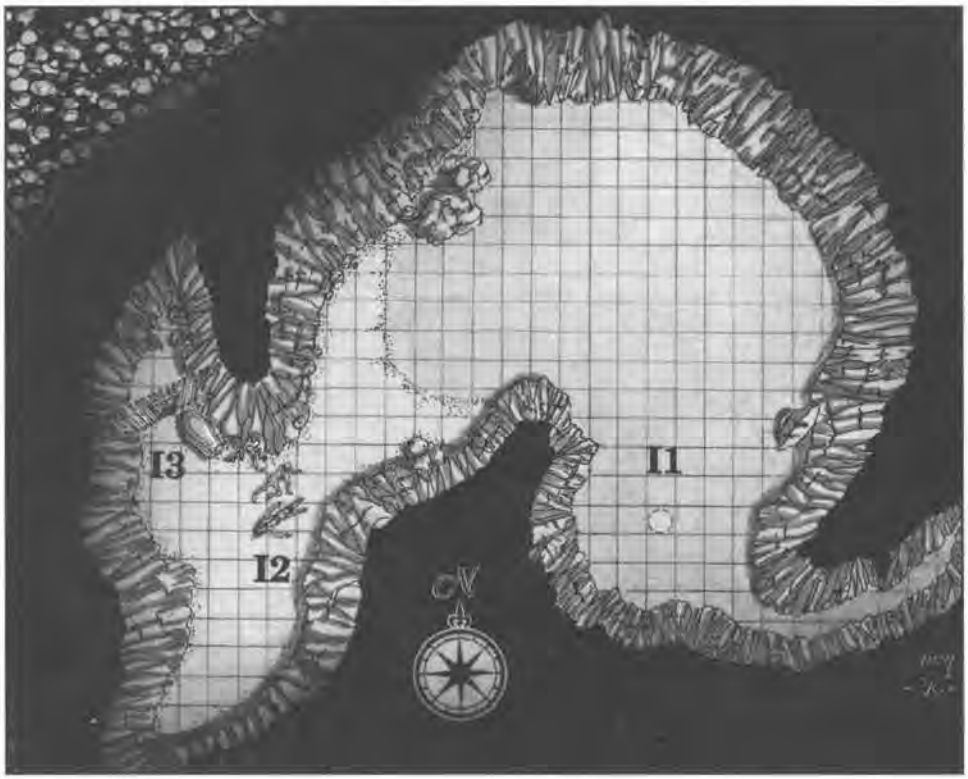
The shaft opens to reveal itself at the center of a T-intersection. One corridor stretches to the south, branching into two tunnels that lead east and west. From the east hall comes the sound of rushing water and a faint misty smell. There is no sound or smell from the other stone halls, and all three are very dark.

Each hall leads to a 30′ × 60′ room. Those to the east and west use treasure to lure the party into a trap designed to weaken them. The undead creatures within are the remains of bandits who once terrorized the local villages. The room to the south contains both a trap and a secret door to Lyman's cavern.

H1. The East Room

Entering this room, you feel a blast of cool mist. Water rushes from a rift in the ceiling into a pool on the floor, where it swirls in a turbulent mass, with no visible exit. On the far side of the pool is a moss-covered stone throne occupied by a skeleton. Its eyes are sparkling green gemstones.

The trap in this room is the water itself. The pool is 3′ deep (as are the pools in all three rooms) and stretches from wall to wall, but it is very turbulent near the center. A hole in the bottom drains the water out to join the waterfall about 30′ from the ground. Any PC trying to cross the pool must make a successful Strength check or be drawn into the drain. Traveling through the drain, into the waterfall, and to the pool below causes 3d6 hp damage from



bumping into rock walls and hitting the water. The PCs can prevent this fall by tying themselves together, levitating over the pool, casting *water walking*, etc. Because of the falling water and mist, the walls are wet and slippery; any PCs attempting to climb walls do so with a –35% penalty.

The skeleton on the throne does not animate, and the two 300-gp emeralds can be easily removed from the eye sockets.

H2. The West Room

> The pool in the center of this room is filled with sparkling clear water. Sitting on a granite throne on the other side is a regal yet repulsive sight: a skeleton clad in ancient armor. In his hands is an ornate sword. The skeleton's eye sockets gleam with two brilliant, clear gems.

The "water" in the pool is actually acid. Stepping into the pool immediately causes 2d6 hp damage. PCs wearing boots suffer only 1d6 hp damage, but the footwear is destroyed. Each round a PC spends in the pool causes an additional 2d6 hp damage. The skeleton on the other side is inanimate, and the gems in its eye sockets are glass. The sword is too rusted to have any value, but the gems in the handle are worth 100 gp. The armor is rusty and pitted. (If the PCs have taken some heavy hits and are in bad shape at this point, insert a box with two *potions of extra-healing* in a secret compartment in the throne.)

H3. The South Room

> As you enter this room, you see a clear, still pool of water, thirty feet across, blocking your path. At the far side of the room is a throne of porous, mossy stone.

The skeleton is a crypt thing, the undead remains of the bandit leader who used to live in the swamp. The crypt thing is doomed to spend eternity in the cavern where it once hid, guarding the remains of its followers. It attacks the party if approached. Before the crypt thing attacks, read the following:

> As you approach the throne, the skeleton comes to life. It rises to its feet and points to you, its teeth clattering. "More burglars come to see what you can take? I have been robbed of my lair, robbed of my men, and robbed of my treasure. Now I shall rob you of your life!"

Crypt Thing: INT very; AL N; AC 3; MV 12; HD 6; hp 36; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA teleport; SD cannot be turned, can be hit only by magical weapons, spell immunity; SZ M; ML 17; XP 975; *MM*/51.

The crypt thing tries to *teleport* the toughest-looking PC to the surface, 30′ above. It then attacks with sharp claws.

If the PCs talk to the crypt thing before making an attempt to attack, it tells them how Lyman Frack found the bandits' lair to his liking and one by one killed them all. The bandits made their last stand in this room, where they were slaughtered by Lyman. (It is their bones lying about; they are clad only in rags.) After completion of his story, the crypt thing attacks the party. When it has been destroyed, the rubies may be picked up from the remains.

The throne of porous stone covers the hidden passage underneath. Lyman can travel through the holes in the porous rock of the throne in insect form. Because this stone is lighter than most, it can be moved by party members whose combined Strength is 25 or more. The hole underneath the throne becomes a 20′-deep, 5′-wide shaft of rough stone leading to a large cave (area **H1**). The small holes in the throne cause a soft whistling sound as air passes through.

The Cavern

I1. Large Cave

> The shaft entrance starts to widen on all sides. The smell is musty in here, and the tread of your feet on the rocks causes a hollow sound. You hear the "plop... plop..." of dripping water below.

The shaft opens out into a large cave with a 20′ ceiling. The sloping floor of the cave is covered with water to a depth of 10′. Any PC can safely drop from the shaft 20′ above into the water at the shaft's location. They must, however, make a swimming proficiency check once they get there unless they are prepared with other means. The water becomes shallower near the southwest side, where a passage rises from the end. The PCs feel a breeze coming from a 1"-wide crack in the wall. This is a crack near the waterfall that Lyman uses to enter the cave in insect form.

I2. Lyman's Hiding Place

A short passage off the cave's "beach" leads to a smaller inner cavern. The air in here smells of rotting flesh — coming from the three bodies lying in disarray on the rough stone floor. Flying insects buzz around the room. There is a passage leading from the room to the west.

The three bodies are really zombies, who attack the party as soon as the PCs enter the room. Lyman has left them here to give him time to prepare for confrontation. Note that the cavern is completely enclosed; if any zombies are turned, they reappear soon.

Zombies (3): INT non-; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 12, 9, 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SD spell immunity; SZ M; ML 20; XP 65; *MM*/373.

When the party has defeated the zombies, read the following to them:

You hear a chuckling sound from the dark passage to the west. Lyman Frack stands there, wearing common trousers and tunic, smelling faintly of herbs. The buzz of insects surrounds him as he smiles at you.

"Fools!" he cries, "I have worked too long here to give up easily. I see you have destroyed my followers. Now you shall become my new servants!"

As the last words leave his mouth, his skin undergoes a hideous change. It comes to life with movement as if tiny creatures consume it. You watch in morbid fascination as the skin moves aside, exposing thousands of miniature transparent wings. A loud buzzing sounds in the room as a swarm of insects erupts from the surface, and what remains of the form of Lyman Frack melts into the air. Within moments there is nothing left of him but a whirlwind of humming, bloodthirsty mosquitoes.

If reduced to one-quarter of his total hit points during battle, or one-half of his total hit points in the first round of combat, Lyman attempts to flee. If it is night, he flees through the inch-wide crack in the east wall of area **H1**. If it is day, the entire swarm lands on the surface of the water in the large cave and lays eggs. This takes five rounds. If all of the insects are killed during this time, he is unsuccessful and is permanently destroyed. If he is successful, it takes him several years to regenerate enough mosquitoes to reform.

I3. Alcove

The small passage to the west leads to a small alcove. The room is damp, and an unpleasant smell hangs in the air. A coffin of porous stone stands in the center of the room, and a row of bars forms a cell at the far end. Pitiful moans can be heard from the darkness beyond the iron bars.

The stone coffin is riddled with holes. Inside, to one corner, is a fine wooden box containing a *wand of size alteration* (seven charges), 11 pearls (ten 100-gp pearls and one *pearl of wisdom* — indistinguishable from the others), a key that opens the locked bars, and 1,100 gp worth of assorted jewelry. There is also a bag containing 320 gp and 50 pp.

Behind the iron bars are the five missing townspeople, including Brigette. They are all sickly, each reduced to 1 hp. The locked bars may be opened with the key in the coffin or with a successful Bend Bars roll. Needless to say, they are all very happy to see the adventurers.

If The Party Goes Off Track...

If the players are hesitant to accuse anyone at the clinic of wrongdoing, Dunchatt can be used to facilitate an attack by having him rob the party. The DM can use Lyman himself if the party is moving too slowly. He attempts to drain the PCs one by one while they rest.

As a last resort, the DM should have one of the PCs suffer an "untimely death" at the clinic and spend some unpleasant nights behind the bars in Lyman's lair. The remaining members of the party should become suspicious when they are not permitted to examine the body before it is buried.

The PCs may decide to dig up the graves of the dead townspeople. They must come up with a convincing argument to do so if they do not wish to anger the people of Rhorton's Grove. The townsmen are shocked to find that the coffins are all empty. They gather and proceed to Lyman's complex, intending to demand an explanation. If this occurs, the PCs need all of their skill to prevent Lyman's servants from slaughtering the entire group.

Concluding The Adventure

The PCs still need to accomplish the difficult task of removing the townsmen from Lyman's lair. With Lyman dead, the toxins leave their bloodstream in 1d8 days. Once they are returned to Rhorton's Grove and the story told, any payment promised to the PCs is cheerfully handed over. The party is offered lodging if it is obvious they need a rest. The jewelry found at the clinic belongs to the residents here, but they will not accept the return of any of it — they consider it to have been rightfully earned.

In addition to experience for treasure and monsters, the PCs should receive 1,000 XP for completing the adventure. For every good PC, however, 200 XP should be subtracted from the total if payment was demanded for taking care of the matter. If this is the case and any PC is lawful good, an additional 500 XP should be subtracted. Ω

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